

Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

Motivation: Pupil Voice, Power and Identity

Thesis

How to cite:

Tomos, Delyth Wyn (2008). Motivation: Pupil Voice, Power and Identity. EdD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2008 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000eb0c>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

Delyth Wyn Tomos

P6177603

Motivation : Pupil Voice, Power and Identity

Doctor of Education (EdD)

The Open University

December 2008

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>Acknowledgements</u>	viii
<u>Abstract</u>	1
<u>Chapter 1 Introduction</u>	2
Rationale for the study	4
Background to the Study	6
The school	6
Tremorfa	10
<u>Chapter 2 Literature Review</u>	12
(i) <u>Pupil Voice</u>	12
Introduction	12
The history of ‘pupil voice’	14
Why give pupils a voice?	19
The power implications of voice	21
The representativeness of pupil voice	25
(ii) <u>Communities of Practice</u>	27
A Social theory of Learning and Community of Practice	27
Learning within Communities of Practice	30
Identity within a Community of Practice	33
Power within a Community of Practice	36
(iii) <u>Motivation</u>	41
Achievement Goal Theory	43
Attribution Theory	46
Self-Worth Theory	49

Self-Efficacy Theory	52
Motivation and Social Goals	54
Summary of Chapter	59
 <u>Chapter 3 Methods and Methodology</u>	 61
Rationale for choice of methodology	61
Study design	63
Selection of pupils	65
Interviewing pupils	66
Supplementary information	71
Consent and Ethical considerations	73
Thematic analysis of the data	76
Validity	79
Translational issues	83
Summary of Chapter	86
 <u>Chapter 4 Presentation and analysis of data</u>	 88
Introduction	88
Translation of data	89
(i) <u>Issues relating to identity</u>	91
Belonging to a school community	93
Friendship groups	94
Changing allegiance – changing learning identity?	113
Feelings of exclusion	120

	Equal opportunities for all?	126
	A pupil's language and learning	132
	Parental support	137
	Coping with family difficulties	142
(ii)	<u>Issues relating to power</u>	148
	Pupils, empowerment and 'voice'	151
	Teachers empowering pupils	154
	Classroom settings	164
	The effects of favouritism	168
	Pupils influencing each other	173
	The effects of bullying	176
	Institutional disempowerment	180
	Families empowering their children	185
	Empowerment and motivation	189
	Summary of chapter	193
<u>Chapter 5</u>	<u>Discussion and Reflection</u>	196
	The effects of relationships and practices at Ysgol Tremorfa on motivation and learning	196
	The effects of relationships and practices of CoPs outside Ysgol Tremorfa on motivation and learning	205
	The case for giving pupils a voice	210
	Implications for policy and practice at Ysgol Tremorfa	213
	Contribution of study findings to knowledge in field	217

Appendices	221
References	256

Appendices :

Appendix 1

Pupils introducing themselves	222
-------------------------------	-----

Appendix 2

Semi-structured interview questions and prompts	231
---	-----

Appendix 3

Dates of interviews and topics covered	235
--	-----

Appendix 4

Translations of transcripts & pupil introductions	244
---	-----

Appendix 5

Glossary of Welsh terms / place names used in thesis	250
--	-----

Appendix 6

Synopsis of study findings for verification by pupils	251
---	-----

Appendix 7

Copy of consent letter sent to parents / guardian & pupil	254
---	-----

Index of Tables

Table 1

Year 11 Performance indicators – Summer 2007	7
--	---

Table 2

Destination of Ysgol Tremorfa Year 11 pupils – Summer 2007	8
--	---

Table 3

Destination of Ysgol Tremorfa Year 13 pupils – Summer 2007	9
--	---

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for their support:

- my academic supervisor, Dr Diana Harris, for her guidance and inspiration throughout this study
- my husband, family, friends and colleagues for their patience and encouragement at all times
- Emyr Tomos & June Richards for their meticulous proof reading and their suggestions regarding improvements to the final draft of the thesis
- Dr Cen Williams & Dr Sylvia P Jones for their suggestions in respect of translation work and in particular Sylvia for validating the translations of Welsh transcripts into English
- the pupils who participated in this study, for giving so willingly of their time, without whose voices, this study could not have taken place.

Motivation : Pupil Voice, Power and Identity

Abstract

This study presents empirical research conducted in a Welsh secondary school where motivation was examined through pupil voice using Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice framework. Consideration was given to social factors that impinge upon a pupil's motivation to participate in learning. Fourteen pupils were interviewed as a collective case study, following which a thematic analysis was conducted. Pupils recognised the influences of family, friendship groups and past learning experiences as strong determinants of learning participation. Power and identity were found to be crucial components of motivation, where a pupil's motivation to learn or failure to participate in learning may both be considered as manifestations of a pupil's empowerment.

Motivation : Pupil Voice, Power and Identity

Chapter 1.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore those factors which are perceived by children as having an effect, whether advantageous or adverse, on their educational motivation. The process of schooling is deeply embedded within particular social settings, with complex relationships and events having a substantial impact upon children's experiences and their eventual academic outcomes. This study explores those social settings and their potential effects upon children's motivation, efforts and expectations. A deeper understanding of a child's school and wider personal experiences can be a valuable tool in enabling educationalists to assess and improve the effectiveness of both teaching and learning, thus ensuring all children are actively involved in their own educational development.

The overarching research question explored in this study is 'what factors do pupils consider affect their motivation and effort at school?' In order to evaluate fully the potential effect of these factors on personal motivation and effort during their school years, it is necessary to investigate a number of sub-questions in respect of children's perceptions of their schooling and other relevant sociological processes.

The following sub-questions are explored in the study:

- How do children perceive their school experiences and what effect do they consider those experiences have on their personal motivation?
- Which factors within a school cause children to be motivated and which factors do they consider to be de-motivating?
- Which factors external to the school cause a child to be motivated and which factors do they consider to be de-motivating?
- How do the various relationships experienced by pupils affect their empowerment as learners and the development of their learning identities?

A basic aim of this study was to ensure, during the research process, that the pupils who took part were given a voice to express their feelings about their schooling and other experiences. At all times they were encouraged to explore those factors which, in their opinion, affected their motivation and ultimate achievement. A sample of 14 pupils ($g=7$, $b=7$) aged between 14 and 18 years, took part in the study and were each interviewed at regular intervals over a period of two to three years. The majority of pupils were interviewed for a total of three to four hours, although some exceeded this time. In general, each pupil

was interviewed until saturation was achieved for the purpose of this study. All pupils were also asked to provide a brief introduction about themselves in their own words (see Appendix 1), providing a fuller background and further expanding upon those views provided in their interviews.

By integrating a collective case study approach into Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice theoretical framework, children's motivation to learn, considered as their participation in a learning community, has been explored in substantial depth. A study of each pupil's own understanding of the influence of their experiences and relationships on their participation in the learning process has enabled the researcher to develop specific theories describing factors which pupils themselves consider to be important in promoting or hindering their motivation to learn and achieve academically.

Rationale for the study

Gendered differences in achievements have been well researched for a number of years (see for example, Gorard *et al* 2001; Hendley *et al* 1995; Mifsud, C 1993; Salisbury *et al* 1999; Warrington & Younger 2000) and I was aware that such differences were a persistent feature at Ysgol Tremorfa. Girls frequently achieved better results than boys in many subjects during key stages 3 to 5 and there was a significant cohort of underachieving boys in each year group. In addition, pupils' attainments frequently reflected their socio-economic backgrounds, with pupils from large social housing estates tending to achieve lower qualifications than their counterparts from different parts of Tremorfa or

the surrounding villages. I was compelled to explore the differences in pupils' achievements in order to develop practices that would improve Ysgol Tremorfa's inclusiveness and support for each pupil irrespective of his/her status.

As a result of my early reading, I was becoming increasingly aware that achievement and underachievement were symptomatic of deeper causes. Consequently, I felt that an exploration of these causes rather than research into pupils' achievements could provide a better insight into their performance. Exploring pupils' motivation could potentially explain why some pupils engage with their learning and gain achievements commensurate with their perceived abilities whilst others do not. Rather than designing a study where motivation could be quantified and evaluated by comparing pupils' attitudes and performances with similar cohorts and appropriate theories, I felt that the use of 'pupil voice' to explore why pupils were, or were not, motivated in respect of their schoolwork, could and should inform the continuing discourse in respect of pupil achievements. This study focuses exclusively on pupils' perceptions of their life experiences in their own words and explores how those experiences translate into motivation and effort to learn.

Background to the study

Given Geertz's (1973) emphasis on providing a 'thick description' for each study, it is believed that the provision of a substantial background to this study is an essential element of the research. The unique nature of the school's community and practices (Wenger, 1998) is described so that the pupils' insights might be considered in the context of their original settings, as well as providing an element of perspicacity of pupils in similar establishments. All names have been changed in order to protect the identity of participants and statistical information received from the Local Authority has been referenced as 'LA source', rather than the county's name, in order to protect further the identity of the school and pupils.

The school.

Ysgol Tremorfa is a bilingual secondary school located in Tremorfa, a small Welsh town, in which pupils are taught from 11 to 18 years of age. All pupils are taught four core subjects, Welsh, English, Mathematics and Science, at GCSE level, in addition to their chosen subjects to GCSE, Entry Level Certificate or vocational qualification. The school also offers Advanced Subsidiary (AS), Advanced Level and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) in a range of subjects to post 16 year old pupils.

The population of the school is approximately 1000 pupils, although there are minor variations in this number from year to year. Approximately 800 pupils

are located in years 7 to 11 with the remaining 200 pupils in years 12 and 13. Pupils are taught as mixed ability groups in most of their subjects in year 7, they are subsequently placed in sets, in their core subjects, in year 8. The school is defined as a bilingual school and all lessons are presented bilingually (Welsh and English) or in Welsh only. Pupils choose three subject options at the end of year 9 and commence their GCSE studies in year 10, completing them in the summer of year 11.

Table 1 : Year 11 Performance indicators – Summer 2007

	Ysgol Tremorfa (%)			County (%)			Wales (%)		
	Total	B	G	Total	B	G	Total	B	G
5 (or more) A* - C	48	44	52	62	56	68	54	49	60
5 (or more) A* - G	86	85	87	91	88	94	86	83	89
No qualifications	8	9	8	3	4	2	4	6	4

(Ysgol Tremorfa: n = 205; County: n = 1516; Wales : n = 39396)

(all percentages to the nearest whole number; B = boys, G = girls)

Table 1 shows the achievements in Summer 2007 of Year 11 pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa alongside county and national (Welsh) results for the same period. Several trends become immediately apparent. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades is lower at Ysgol Tremorfa than both the

county and national levels, with girls performing significantly better than boys at all three levels. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to G grades at Ysgol Tremorfa is similar to the national level, but is below the county figure. The percentage of pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa leaving school with no qualifications is higher than at county and national levels. All of these figures suggest that the pupils of Ysgol Tremorfa are underperforming academically in relation to both county and national results.

Table 2 : Destination of Ysgol Tremorfa Year 11 pupils – Summer 2007

	Ysgol Tremorfa (%)			County (%)			Wales (%)		
	Total	B	G	Total	B	G	Total	B	G
Year 12 – Ysgol Tremorfa	46	46	47	29	27	31	42	38	46
F.E. College	31	27	34	51	48	54	36	35	36
Work based training	12	9	14	8	10	6	7	9	5
In employment	5	10	0	5	8	2	4	6	3
Not engaged in employment, education or training	6	8	5	4	6	3	7	8	6
Other	0	0	0	3	1	4	4	4	4

(Ysgol Tremorfa: n = 205; County: n = 1516; Wales : n = 39396)

(all percentages to the nearest whole number; B = boys, G = girls)

Following GCSE examinations, pupils may return to Ysgol Tremorfa to study for A.S. / A Level and GNVQ or they may enter a Further Education College to pursue other qualifications. Others may seek full or part-time employment. Table 2 shows that a higher proportion of Summer 2007 pupils pursued further studies at Ysgol Tremorfa than did their counterparts at county and national level, although a smaller proportion pursued further education than at county and national level. However, it can be seen that pupils pursuing further studies, either at school in year 12 or at a FE college is similar at Ysgol Tremorfa to county and national level. This may suggest that the majority of year 11 pupils consider the pursuit of further qualifications as a worthwhile endeavour.

Table 3 : Destination of Ysgol Tremorfa Year 13 pupils – Summer 2007

	Ysgol Tremorfa (%)			County (%)			Wales (%)		
	Total	B	G	Total	B	G	Total	B	G
Higher Education	48	45	50	58	55	60	60	57	62
F.E. College	20	34	10	10	11	9	7	7	7
Work based training	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	1
In employment	19	14	23	7	7	8	11	11	10
Not engaged in employment, education or training	3	0	5	2	1	3	5	5	4
Other *	10	7	12	22	24	20	16	18	16

(Ysgol Tremorfa: n = 69; County: n = 327; Wales : n = 11950)

(all percentages to the nearest whole number; B = boys, G = girls)

(* includes pupils who have moved away or taken a gap year)

Table 3 shows that a smaller proportion of year 13 pupils who left Ysgol Tremorfa in Summer 2007 pursued further studies in higher education than did their counterparts at county or national level, although a higher proportion chose to study at FE college than at county or national level. A higher proportion of Ysgol Tremorfa year 13 pupils left school to pursue employment than did their peers at county or national level. There are clear gender differences apparent in the proportion of boys proceeding to FE college compared to girls at school, county or national level. In contrast, a higher proportion of year 13 girls left Ysgol Tremorfa to pursue employment than did boys at school, county and national level.

Tremorfa.

The catchment area of Ysgol Tremorfa is predominantly Welsh speaking with approximately 80% of the local population speaking Welsh as a first language (County = 70%, Wales = 21%, LA source). There also exists a significant number of Welsh learners who live in the area. In excess of 90% of the pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa are fluent Welsh speakers and a small number of non-Welsh speakers have undergone immersion language courses in Welsh at Welsh language units in the county. The dominant language of the school is Welsh, which is spoken by the majority of pupils during their lessons and in the playground. However, there are small groups of pupils who speak to each other in English, generally because one or more of their group speak English as their first language.

Pupils who enter year 7 at Ysgol Tremorfa come from a range of local Welsh primary schools. Some of the primary schools are located in rural communities whilst others are located in various parts of Tremorfa town itself. Feeder primary school sizes range from 30 to 400 pupils, with the smaller schools tending to be in rural locations and the larger schools located in larger villages and Tremorfa town itself.

Tremorfa town has a number of electoral wards that are severely economically disadvantaged, as are some of the surrounding villages. The school itself is placed in a category where 10 - 20% of pupils qualify for free school meals. The 2007 county median employee annual income at £21934 was 101.5% and 91.8% of the Welsh and British medians respectively (LA source). However, the median annual household incomes of those wards within the school's catchment area ranged from £19142 to £29032 whilst mean values ranged from £22020 to £33520 (LA source). These figures suggest that the geographical communities of pupils who attend Ysgol Tremorfa vary significantly in terms of economic advantage or disadvantage and may be a significant factor in pupils' expectations and ambitions.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review.

Part (i)

Pupil Voice

“Children should be seen and not heard...”

(Early 15th Century English proverb)

Introduction.

As a consequence of recent education legislature and the recognition of children’s rights as consumers, engaging with pupil voice has become an important practice that all schools currently need to implement (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). In a democratisation of learning, schools need to be seen to be locations where all participants have the ability to contribute to policy and practice, as well as to be reflecting upon the effectiveness of such policies and practices (Robinson & Taylor, *ibid.*; Gunter & Thomson, 2007).

Researchers have long recognised the value of listening to that which children report about their school experiences and a substantial corpus of studies have underpinned policies to improve pupils’ academic achievements (e.g. Duffield *et al*, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Other studies have focused on children’s schooling experiences, concentrating on their attitudes to learning in order to

recommend practices that may improve learning and participation in school (e.g. Elliott *et al*, 2001; Fielding 2001; Keys & Fernandes, 1994). Pupils are uniquely positioned as commentators on their schooling and other wider experiences and can provide powerful insights into factors that they consider important in determining their attitudes and motivations to learn (Hargreaves, 1996).

Seeking the voice of minority or silenced groups is an emergent phenomenon of the latter half of the 20th century and it is seen that giving a 'voice' to such groups or to individuals refers to:

providing that group with an agency by which a particular point of view
is expressed or represented

(OED, 2005).

That is, giving an individual or group the right to express opinions or attitudes regarding matters that substantially affect them. Lincoln (1995) highlights the importance of seeking and listening to student voices within educational dialogue in the following terms:

... it makes sense to attend to ways in which children actively shape their
contexts and begin to model their worlds and the way in which we, in
turn, shape the possibilities available for learners. (p. 89)

Pupils are also seen to be in a unique position so as to advise practitioners, researchers and policymakers regarding issues that impinge directly upon them.

both as individuals and as groups of learners. Failing to engage with pupils in dialogue concerning their learning means that we risk failing them.

One of the first issues that requires consideration is the reason why the voices of those most affected by educational policy decisions - the pupils themselves, have been conspicuously absent from most educational debates for many years. Any analysis of the education process needs also to enquire regarding that which can be learned from the pupils themselves, regarding individual school experiences and this knowledge can then be used to influence future educational practice and policies. In giving pupils a voice, it also needs to be asked whether educational practitioners are certain that such a voice is indeed wanted by the recipient and if wanted, do they ensure that it is listened to in a meaningful way (Lincoln, 1995)?

The history of 'pupil voice'

Who speaks? For what and to whom?

(Said, 1989, p.212)

Historically, the rights of children have been argued by adults, who have invariably spoken on their behalf (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Fielding, 2001) and these rights have included improvements for children in legislative, social and educational areas. For example, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1924, stipulated that support was to be provided for children who had lost family members during the First World War. In later years, provision was

provided, in the 1944 Education Act, for the organization of the education system in England and Wales, to provide a 'national (educational) service, locally administered', with the aim of ensuring that each child received a free education up to the age of 15 years. Following these developments, The Declaration on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1959) proposed that, in addition to receiving a free, compulsory education, children were to be presented with additional opportunities for play and recreation. This declaration recognized that children were able to benefit, both socially and educationally, from informal social interactions as well as from formal teaching at school. Undoubtedly, this legislation improved upon the opportunities available to children. However, despite these educational developments, no provision was given to children to enable them to express their personal views regarding the education they received or any other matters affecting them. Children were often the subjects of educational and social legislation, but were not allowed to actively participate in public or private debates that had direct effects on their lives, educationally and otherwise.

However, in 1972, following a national conference held by the National Union of School Students (NUSS), a policy document was drawn up, by the pupils themselves, that was '... one of the most uncompromising and idealistic statements of liberation philosophy ever seen in British educational politics' (Wagg, 1996, p.76). The primary aim of this policy document was to improve school organisation so as to be of direct benefit to the children themselves. To this end, the document called for the abolition of corporal punishment and compulsory school uniforms and argued that each school pupil should have

access to a 'common room' and enjoy unrestricted movement, both in and out of school property during break and lunch times. Many of the proposed changes within the document failed to materialise, but it was perceived to be an important milestone, in the context of pupil voice in Britain, and it demonstrated several issues of particular concern to children themselves. In ensuing years and following the 1979 International Year of the Child, other documents were produced in which children's rights were given increasing prominence (e.g. Stenhouse, 1983), however, few of these documents sought the views of children themselves before being published.

Lincoln (1995) notes that developments in consulting schoolchildren regarding their experiences and preferences, reflected a wider agenda, relating to improving the civil rights of several previously subjugated and silenced groups. However, it was not until the publication in 1989, of The Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) that it was stipulated that children themselves should be consulted with respect to issues relating to their own lives:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

(Article 12.1)

The right of children to express their views became enshrined in legislation, although the British Government seemed hesitant when implementing this practice, stating that they 'fully complied with the Convention and that there

was therefore no action required to achieve compliance' (Department of Education and Science (1991) cited in Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). The situation seems to have improved steadily during recent years and pupils are now seen to be consulted with respect to their views on aspects of their own schooling. For example, McIntyre, Pedder & Rudduck (2005) discuss how a sample of pupils were consulted directly, and their views sought, as part of the 'Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning' (2000 – 2003) programme, which was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council. This programme provided a group of teachers with opportunities to respond to, and to integrate pupils' ideas into their own teaching methods, with the ultimate aim of improving the way in which pupils were taught and to enable children to engage with their own learning processes. However, this was a specific project, involving a small sample of pupils in three schools and, although it could be argued that its findings were indicative of many other schools, it must be remembered that very few pupils in each school were actually consulted.

The pressure placed on schools to compete and to deliver improved results, year on year, has meant that schools need to be seen to be seeking the views of their pupils, as part of their general strategy to raise educational standards. The Education Act, 2002, stipulates that schools must consult with their pupils and a school's Self Evaluation procedures require that it address the following question: 'What are the views of learners, parents/carers and other stakeholders and how do you become aware of those views?' However, despite such legislation, pupil opinion is often limited by the means by which their views are collected. For example, children are sometimes requested, by those in authority,

to complete questionnaires by ticking boxes or circling Likert scale statements; seldom are pupils given opportunities, in such questionnaires, to express their own views through the medium of their own words. Information gathered by such an exercise is of little true value to the school when planning future strategies to improve children's learning and frequently reflects a school's superficial interpretation of accountability (Duffield et al, 2000; Fielding, 2001, Robinson & Taylor, 2007). Failing to understand the views of pupils, freely given in their own words, means that schools are unable to fully appreciate, or address, issues that children themselves perceive to be important determinants of their development as learners and participants in a wider society.

School improvements are seen to have driven the pupil consultation agenda over recent years (e.g. Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Fielding, 2006), and these consultations have, in turn, influenced the development of improved teaching and learning strategies within schools. Whilst acknowledging the importance of developing and refining such strategies, there is concern that focusing exclusively on school improvement, from a managerial perspective, allows only a partial understanding of pupils' school experiences (Fielding, 2006). Focusing exclusively on a desire to improve school results may perpetuate the division between 'betters and lessers' (Said, 1989, p. 207; also McIntyre, Pedder & Rudduck, 2005) with the consequent effect of silencing further the voices of certain pupils who perceive themselves to be marginalised. These include pupils defined as mid to low achievers, who often perceive that schools offer them an irrelevant education (Wenger, 1998), those who have had difficulties in

conforming to school structures, those who have failed to benefit from the education offered them and those whose articulacy means that they do not

“ ‘speak’ the same language as the school” (Robinson & Taylor, 2007, p. 11).

Why give pupils a voice ?

It could be argued that, in the past, the views of children have been attributed a lower status than those of adults, as a result of their perceived lack of experience, their ‘minor’ legal status, their unreliability and their need to be protected from exploitation (Masson, 2004). Policies and practices were often debated and prepared by adults, for the intended benefit of children. However, recent legislative and policy changes (e.g. UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1989) recognise that children have an important contribution to make in evolving discourses relating to their advantage. Although individual teachers may learn the views of their pupils during informal discussions (Lincoln, 1995), this cannot be given the same weight as a whole-school exercise that deliberately seeks children’s views by providing them with a voice.

The benefits associated with providing a voice to pupils appears to be manifold, and include improvements to teaching and learning, the exploration of gender differences and how they affect educational achievement, an understanding of the reasons for pupil motivation, the exploring of pupils’ interests and competencies, the reasons for engagement in learning, an understanding of pupil behaviour, by exploring how pupils’ backgrounds (both socio-economic and

ethnic) affect their personal learning outcomes (e.g. Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996; Duffield et al, 2000; Warrington & Younger, 2000; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005). Furthermore, seeking pupil voice may be seen as a means of including pupils in decision processes that relate to their own learning, in a manner that reflects an increase of democratic engagement within a wider society :

The pupil voice movement represents a new departure because it is based on the premise that schools should reflect the democratic structures in society at large. Under this conception the school becomes a community of participants engaged in the common endeavour of learning.

(Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p. 135)

The act of consulting pupils is often viewed positively by pupils (e.g. Wood, 2003), where improved ownership of their learning reduces their perceived powerlessness and possible disengagement. Pupils, when consulted, should be provided with the reasons why their views are being sought to enable them to give informed consent, thus retaining ownership of their views and any contribution that may be made by them (Masson, 2004). It is also essential that they be informed of what they may realistically expect from the consultation process (Fielding, 2004). Failure to do this and to deliver what has been promised is exploitative and can reinforce pupils' feeling of powerlessness about their own learning (Fielding, *ibid*).

Pupil perceptions of school life are inherently different from those of adults within the same organization (e.g. Fielding, 2001; Wood, 2003; Gunter & Thomson, 2007) even when experiencing the same events. Pupils and adults may attribute different importance to similar events, thus reflecting their own individual experiences, histories and expectations (Wood, 2003). In such cases, pupils and adults might perceive that different practices benefit their learning and wider school experiences in differing ways (Wenger, 1998). Pupils' views can be instrumental in formulating changes to school practices, with the potential to benefit a majority of pupils but, until consulted, such changes are unable to materialise (Wood, *ibid*). Furthermore, pupil voice, used in conjunction with other voices at school (e.g. teachers' voice), has the potential to explore how the development of effective learning practices, benefit the whole school community (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The power implications of 'voice'.

Are we witnessing the emergence of something genuinely new, exciting and emancipatory that builds on rich traditions of democratic renewal and transformation?... Or are we presiding over the further entrenchments of existing assumptions and intentions using student or pupil voice as an additional mechanism of control?

(Fielding 2001, p. 100)

One of the prime reasons for giving any group a 'voice' is to empower that group, so that, in the act of making declarations about their views, the group's

status is improved. This may be considered an altruistic and benevolent act, with an anticipated, beneficial, outcome for the group in question. However, as Fielding (2001) argues, closer examination of the process of providing a group with a 'voice', suggests that this may not always be the case.

Alcoff (1991) suggests that providing a group with an opportunity to voice its views does not automatically empower that group and can, in fact, reinforce the group's existing disempowerment. This highlights the difficult question of defining which individual or group the 'voice' actually represents. Citing Trebilcot's (1988) original research, which focused on a lesbian feminist community, Alcoff asserts that speaking for others, in some cases, 'constitutes a violence' (p. 20) that has the ability to disable the person or group being spoken for, from engaging in future discourse, as individuals are already speaking in their stead. With reference to examples, where declarations were made on behalf of marginalised groups, Alcoff (1991) questions the legitimacy of any individual outside that particular group that make declarations on their behalf. She further argues that speaking for others is 'arrogant, vain, unethical, and politically illegitimate' (p.6) and reinforces that group's inferior status through reliance upon a less oppressed group to 'allow' them to speak. This argument resonates with Robinson & Taylor (2007) who warn that, within a school context, seeking pupil voice may be seen as a means of control, rather than a 'move towards the democratic inclusivity of pupils' (p. 11).

In a research situation, Humphries (1994) argues that the process of enquiry itself can potentially dis-empower those being researched by reinforcing the

power inequality that already exists between researcher and researched. This is particularly relevant to the process of seeking pupils' views, where the consultation process itself may be seen as 'perpetuating hierarchies in which pupils can only contribute if and when authorized by teachers to speak' (Rudduck 2006, p. 137). With specific reference to educational research involving pupil voice, Fielding (2004) argues that researchers should ensure that the study processes addresses Humphries' (*ibid.*) central concerns:

- Accommodation. Refers to the process of accepting existing ideas that, 'conform to already established vocabularies and beliefs', even when these ideas may be harmful to specific groups or individuals. This concurs with Said's (1989) argument that research can sometimes repeat and reconstruct existing prejudices, unquestioningly, thus reaffirming the inferior status of those being studied.
- Accumulation. Refers to the desire of certain researchers to manipulate and control groups or individuals, by accumulating knowledge about oppressed groups, rather than empowering them through seeking new knowledge from those groups, shared and received without prejudice. Drawing upon Said's work (1989), Humphries (1994) & Fielding (2004) argue that such accumulation manipulates those being researched, when the language used, often reflects the superior power status of the researcher. The process often reinforces, rather than negates, existing stereotypical inequalities.

- Appropriation. Refers to the means by which a superior group reinforces a particular view of the inferior, researched group, held by those in powerful positions, by affirming the assumed relative positions of the empowered and disempowered groups and their values.

Although the above principles above are discrete in nature, Fielding (2004) argues that studies frequently contain one or more aspects that serve to reinforce the researched group's subjugated status and that the use of language is decisive in this respect. In the research at Ysgol Tremorfa, those theories underpinning the study informed certain of the fundamental methodological choices made. Furthermore, not only was it seen as essential that translated interview transcripts were seen to convey accurate meanings, but also great importance was placed upon the manner in which pupils expressed themselves. Endeavour was made to ensure that the nature of the language used, when representing those to whom a voice had been given, should not reinforce the group's relative disadvantage (Fielding, *ibid*).

When acknowledging these problems, it necessitates an examination of the reasons why any 'voice' is being sought by a researcher, and how any knowledge is constructed and represented thereafter. It is neither feasible, nor desirable, for an individual to detach her or himself completely from specific social, geographic and temporal locations, as such locations make each event unique and should, therefore, be included in any account of that particular event (Alcoff, 1991). Alcoff also demonstrates that the practice of 'speak(ing) only for myself' (p. 6) only provides partial knowledge, and does not negate the

effects of that been said and its bearing upon other individuals or groups. Alcoff argues further that replacing the 'I' with 'we' does not address the problem associated with speaking for others and therefore, does not lend any legitimacy to the knowledge and understanding being constructed. Seeking to generalize a phenomenon, without acknowledging the importance of its social context, provides a limited understanding of that specific phenomenon. This, in turn, affects the meanings and truths constructed during such discourse (Alcoff, *ibid.*).

The representativeness of pupil voice.

Before exploring the views expressed by pupils, it is necessary to consider the nature of those pupils taking part in the consultation. Pupil voice does not represent a homogenous body of views; pupils do not all share consensual opinions regarding matters relating to their schooling, nor do they possess the same degree of confidence and articulacy in expressing such views (McIntyre, Pedder & Rudduck, 2005). Pupil voice needs, therefore, to reflect the pluralistic views of children, who often come from different backgrounds and hold varying experiences and abilities. However, Rudduck (2006) warns that seeking to consult the view of each pupil in a school could yield information that is “(a) ‘mile wide’ promotion with only ‘inch thick’ understanding” (p.133).

It is also important to acknowledge the voices missing from any such research, that is, those individuals who, for various reasons, have not been consulted. Hargreaves (1996) warns against the perils of accommodative practices, by

giving a voice to those who, 'broadly echo our own', thus enabling only a 'partial discourse' to be constructed' (LeCompte, 1993). Furthermore, Hargreaves (*ibid.*) argues that 'dissonant voices' (p.17) and marginalised individuals may offer the greatest insights into that which is taking place in schools:

They are well placed to possess a kind of perspicacity, throwing broader light on the cultural order that others take for granted

(Hargreaves, 1996, p. 17)

Whilst recognising the importance of exploring a diverse voice, the researcher became uneasy regarding defining and identifying 'dissonant voices', by potentially empowering one group of pupils to the detriment of another. Placing importance upon 'dissonant voices' within a study, can imply giving consideration or importance to such voices, merely because they have something controversial to share. In such cases, the expectation of such views can result in an interview that is contrived to bring about controversy. Such a practice is seen as exploitative and can needlessly engineer the discussion of views not necessarily reflecting those matters that really concerned participants. Each pupil who contributed to this study did so because she/he wished to share perceptions regarding her/his understanding of her/his world and to this end, no view was attributed a different status because it appeared to represent a minority or majority view.

Part (ii)

Communities of Practice

A social theory of learning and Communities of Practice

The emergence of different learning theories (e.g. behaviourist, constructivist and cognitive learning theories) has provided both practitioners and researchers with insights and understandings of how individuals learn effectively, and these theories have been crucial in informing new educational practices and policies. Whilst a substantial body of knowledge already exists, relating to the different developmental stages of learners, how knowledge is constructed and how learners interact with new knowledge (see for example, Skinner, 1974; Piaget, 1954; Anderson, 1983), the social perspectives of learning have not, in general, been addressed in significant depth.

In acknowledging the importance of existing theories of learning, Wenger (1998) argues that a social theory of learning, focusing on learning as a socially embedded endeavour, is necessary. Referring to his earlier work with Jean Lave, where a simple linear, cause and effect model of learning was rejected, Lave & Wenger (1991) establish that learning is a direct consequence of social participation by the learner. Furthermore, Wenger (1998) highlights how learning needs to be explored as an active and interactive activity within specific social settings, where interactions facilitate both individual and collective learning. On an individual basis, it can be seen that a person explores

and modifies his/her views, behaviour and attitudes, in order to maintain and develop future social relations, whereas:

collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise

(Wenger, 1998, p 45)

Learning is thus a consequence of participation in practices, and the location of such learning and practices is defined by Wenger (1998) as a 'Community of Practice' (CoP). By bringing together the concepts of community and practice as one entity, Wenger highlights the importance of both concepts in defining each other. A community is formed because of the 'mutual engagement' between its members in practices that are necessary for that community to function. The practices engaged in by the participants define and reflect the functions of the community itself. A CoP thus reflects a 'joint enterprise' (Wenger, 1998, p. 45) in which its various members negotiate and maintain the practices of that community on a shared basis and, in so doing, undergo a socialization process that defines their learning identities and their membership of that particular community.

Individuals are invariably members of different CoPs at the same time, participating in different practices to varying degrees, developing different learning identities and negotiating different power statuses within each

community. For instance, school pupils, in addition to being members of their families belong to a particular school, various friendship groups, registration groups, year groups, gangs, sports teams, youth clubs, or other common interest groups. All of these are individual CoPs with different functions, histories, repertoires, jargon, shared meanings, mutual relationships, and modes of participation and belonging. CoPs are also characterized by the collective values or 'products of reification' (Wenger, 1998, p. 61) that members have negotiated over time, and these values are reflected in the practices of the community's members. In noting the non-homogenous nature of CoPs, Wenger (*ibid.*) notes that every individual brings different values and experiences into her/his CoPs and each will both influence and be influenced by the practices of the CoP. That is, each individual's identity will be altered as a consequence of being a member of that CoP as well as the mode and degree of their participation in the CoP's practices.

Lave and Wenger (1991) define individuals, as they enter a new community, in terms of being 'legitimate peripheral participants' (p.35) who initially observe the practices of that community from its peripheral margins. Over time, such individuals are able to learn how to align themselves to the practices that they have observed and understood (Wenger, 1998). Participation within that community is able to develop further as he or she establishes a deeper understanding of how to engage with the community's practices, although, degree of participation may vary over time and differ from individual to individual. For an individual to participate fully within such a community, it becomes necessary for the community itself to include and accept new members

and this process of acceptance involves the forging of new relationships through teaching and learning further practices. Wenger (ibid) states that ‘community maintenance’ (p. 74) is an intrinsic part of any practice and it is this maintenance that enables newcomers to become mutually engaged within that community. Wenger further demonstrates, that accommodating and integrating new generations of members is a central characteristic of a long established practice and it is with these established processes that newcomers learn to engage, as they become members of a specific community of practice.

Within the context of a school, pupils commencing as new members and participants of its community, are described as legitimate peripheral participants in its practices, as well as in new peer and friendship groups within the school concerned. By negotiating membership of, and developing different modes of participation in various CoPs, pupils are seen to develop learning identities within those CoPs, through their relationships with other members and their participation in community practices. Individuals also navigate complex power relationships as a consequence of CoP membership and their relationships with other members, and as a consequence, are able to assume more powerful role in some CoPs than others.

Learning within Communities of Practice

Highlighting the fact that learning is a process that is entirely socially embedded, Wenger (1998) demonstrates that in a CoP, practices must facilitate sufficient mutual engagement in order that all participants can jointly pursue

tasks that serve to allow the CoP to achieve its objectives. Wenger (*ibid.*) argues that learning is much more complex than merely learning how to undertake certain tasks and although he acknowledges that learning does involve mental processes, he emphasises that learning is essentially about the individual's ability to negotiate meanings and to develop practices. That is, the learner internalizes the community's practices and this shapes the individual's identity within the CoP. Giving an example of a community of artisans who pass on their craft through the generations, he suggests that such communities succeed in integrating newcomers as they develop their skills and pursue the common standards of practice that that community has adopted, that is, the participants engage in learning. Thus, practices evolve over time as participants share their history of learning with each other. Therefore, the individual's learning identity as well as the practices in which they participate are both necessary components of learning.

It can be argued that such a model of learning has particular relevance to the context of a school as a community of practice. In such a case, children who enter a new school can be defined as legitimate peripheral participants, engaging in the process of learning how to become pupils within that particular school by spending time with other pupils, discussing how to complete specific activities, making enquiries regarding the completion of tasks, and through observing how older pupils negotiate their own school lives. Learning takes place as new meanings are negotiated and understood, and learning identities develop incrementally and continuously within a school context (Wenger, 1998).

In addition, children negotiate learning identities, within other CoPs such as their families and friendship groups where they may engage in both formal and informal learning. In some cases, the values of different CoPs may not be convergent resulting in tensions within the individual where they need to address hierarchies of values and negotiate their learning identity within those different communities. For instance, a pupil's friendship group and family may harbour different attitudes to learning, or there may be tensions within a particular friendship group in negotiating their core values. In contrast, another pupil may be a member of a friendship group whose common values reflect those of their family's. The presence of divergent or convergent values between and within different CoPs have a significant influence on the development of an individual's overall learning identity (Wenger, 1998) and this may manifest itself as the individual's degree of motivation and effort.

The extent to which an individual participates in learning practices can also be determined by the value attributed by that individual to learning a particular curriculum. Wenger (1998) argues that difficulties can be seen to arise when the school's curriculum creates a “ conflict between their [*the pupils*'] social and personal lives and their intellectual engagement in school” (p. 270). In such situations, pupils may come to believe that the school's learning practices do not address their own perceived learning needs. Pupils may consider that certain curricular contents are uninteresting or irrelevant, in other cases, their membership of alternative CoPs, such as family or friendship group may make engagement with learning a difficult process.

It is important to note that an individual's non-participation with the learning process, is not always a permanent feature of an individual's learning identity, however, there are occasions when an individual pupil will spend many years at the periphery of learning practices within a school. With reference to the educational institution's over-emphasis on acquiring knowledge from the curriculum, Wenger (1998) warns that "identification with or alienation from an institution of learning will have deeper effects than success or failure in acquiring elements of a curriculum" (p. 270). Unless pupils are given opportunities to explain openly why they consider that they are marginalized, then it is conceivable that they will not become full participants of the learning or social culture of their school.

Identity within Communities of Practice

We not only produce our identities through the practice we engage in,
but we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in.

(Wenger, 1998, p. 164)

By highlighting the mutually defining roles of identity and practice in a CoP, Wenger (1998) develops a flexible framework, through which to consider the fluid nature and negotiations involved in the formation of identity. It is further argued that, as individuals hold concurrent membership of several communities,

their combined, negotiated experiences, within a range of communities, is instrumental in the development of their own specific identity (Younger & Warrington, 1996). The means by which individuals perceive their experiences will be largely determined by their sense of who they are – their self identity, for instance, family socio-economic background, gender, ethnic background, where they live, family practices and so on (Jenkins, 1996). Although an individual's self-identity is seen to be largely constant over time (Jenkins, *ibid.*), those communities in which they participate as individuals may be seen to change, thus ensuring that an individual acquires and adopts different identities within those unique settings. Past experiences of personal success or failure are often seen as significant determinants of how an individual negotiates new practices and these experiences, both positive and negative in nature, become firmly embedded in their respective identities. As a consequence of such personal experiences, it can be seen that certain individuals become better able than their peers, to participate fully in any new activities and practices they encounter and are consequently seen to adapt and apply new strategies to new situations.

Wenger (1998) sees identity as an “interaction of multiple convergent and divergent (learning identity) trajectories” (p. 154) – in this case, a trajectory relates to a pathway that cannot always be predicted, one that is un-interrupted and continuously subjected to a range of external influences. Such trajectories are seen always to be socially embedded, may involve formal or informal learning, and enable the individual to explore developing identity as a consequence of following particular trajectories. Furthermore, an individual's

motivation is seen to be significantly driven by his or her experience of the identity trajectories pursued, both within and between different CoPs (Wenger, *ibid.*), however, the contribution that unique trajectories make to an individual's overall learning identity, will not necessarily be of equal importance. The degree of an individual's participation in a CoP's practices is significantly different, for individuals who pursue peripheral identity trajectories, from the participation of peers who pursue insider trajectories (Wenger, *ibid.*). Furthermore, an individual's participation varies over time and differs with regard to membership of different CoPs, and their learning identities are constantly evolving as a consequence of multi-membership and modes of participation.

Applying Wenger's (1998) analysis of an individual's learning identity to the situation of school pupils, requires a recognition of the varying effects that participation in different CoPs has as on their lives, in addition to an appreciation of the temporal nature of such participation. Participation in individual CoPs, as well as gaining membership of different types of CoPs, can be seen as either being collaborative or conflictive in nature, and can result in the promotion or inhibition of the positive development of an individual's specific learning identity. The repercussions associated with participation of this kind are further discussed in the section addressing the concept of motivation within this chapter.

Power within Communities of Practice

Power issues are seen to be an inherent characteristic of membership of CoPs, as roles and practices are regularly negotiated by their members (Wenger, 1998). School communities are often excellent manifestations of the fluid nature of roles that individuals are able to adopt and concur with Foucault's (1980) view of power as:

...something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions as a chain... not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power.

(p.98)

For example, in classroom situations, most pupils, irrespective of their age, will defer to a teacher's authority as they deem the teacher, on account of their age, experience and position in school, to be in a position of power over them. This is a practice that pupils have learnt themselves by observing and imitating other pupils over a period of time. Some pupils will have experienced the corrective measures that follow when they have failed to defer to their teacher's authority. Both cases are examples of pupils learning how to align themselves with the practice that is necessary in a school learning situation as dictated by a particular set of rules and guidelines.

However, in a different situation, for instance in the school playground, all pupils are not equal. For example, younger pupils will defer to older pupils for reasons such as admiration or a fear of being bullied. Therefore, in a matter of minutes older pupils can change from being in a subordinate position in the classroom to being in a dominant position over other pupils as a consequence of different practices in different settings. This also highlights how different identities are negotiated within a CoP as altered circumstances allow individuals to change their relative positions at different times.

In his analysis and contextualisation of a social theory of learning, Wenger (1998) demonstrates the central role of theories of power with respect to identity formation and learning, and seeks to conceptualize power by avoiding 'simply conflictual perspectives... as well as simply consensual models' (p. 15). Although recognising the role of education as a means of social control, Wenger also focuses attention on power as the construction and ownership of an individual's meanings through social participation and mutual relationships within different CoPs. As a consequence of the non-homogenous nature of CoPs, he argues that mutual participation within a group is inherently based upon, and reflects the nature of the different power status of each member of each particular CoP. Because of this, it therefore, becomes necessary to give consideration to an individual's empowerment as a consequence of CoP membership and the location of various CoPs within a given institution.

Different modes of belonging and participation in practices, within a specific CoP, determine the individual's power status within that CoP. As newcomers to

a CoP, legitimate peripheral participation provide individuals with opportunities to increase their participation in practices through the following of inbound trajectories that enhance learning identity, in addition to an individual's empowerment within that CoP (Wenger, 1998). However, not every individual is seen to pursue an inbound trajectory in order to become a full participant of a CoP and the participation of other individuals may be reduced over time due to various factors. Consideration of these trajectories within a single CoP provides a powerful insight into an individual's sense of empowerment within that specific CoP (Wenger *ibid.*).

Wenger (1998) also argues that an individual's alignment with a specific CoP does not necessarily indicate empowerment within that CoP, and suggests that alignment can result from allegiance or compliance, suggesting very different power statuses within a CoP. Individuals can be seen to passively participate in practices with which they do not identify closely, for a variety of reasons (such as fear of being excluded), suggesting that both the degree and mode of participation need to be explored in depth, in order to understand an individual's degree of empowerment and the corresponding effect they may have upon their learning identity. Central to this process, and requiring some consideration, is the individual's perception of how they, as individuals, are able to influence the development of a specific practice within the CoPs in which they participate (Wenger, *ibid.*). By examining pupils' perceptions of inclusion and marginalisation within their CoPs, it is possible to gain substantial

understanding of their state of empowerment, both within the CoP and as learners within the institution concerned.

In extending the characteristics and participation of CoP membership to that of multiple CoPs, it is seen that an individual's state of empowerment becomes more complex, particularly as different CoPs yield varying degrees of influence over an individual's power status (Wenger, 1998). Different CoPs are also able to engage in different enterprises and such engagement can either amplify or reduce an individual's general degree of empowerment. For instance, a pupil's family and friendship groups could be very supportive of his/her learning resulting in a positive effect on the individual's learning and sense of empowerment. In contrast, another pupil might have a supportive family but also belong to a friendship group that didn't value learning, that pupil's sense of empowerment may be compromised as a consequence of membership of CoPs that did not engage in similar enterprises (Day, 1996).

Institutions such as Ysgol Tremorfa are locations of hierarchical power structures and authority which operate by means of a repertoire of procedures, policies and rules, in order to complete their objectives (Wenger, 1998). Within such structures, different communities participate in practices necessary to fulfil their institutional roles, as well as develop practices that reflect their unique membership at a particular time. For example, communities may comprise of groups of teachers who teach specific subjects, classroom groups, sports teams, and drama or music groups, all of whom are seen to be engaged in different aspects of the learning process. In addition, friendship groups are able to form

both within and between different communities. In such a context, any similar institution can be considered as a 'constellation' (Wenger, *ibid.* p. 126) of communities and practices, having members in common, sharing histories, resources and general enterprises and serving predominantly common causes. The power status of the particular CoP within the structure of the institution, dictates the potential empowerment of its collective members and the relationships that exist within the CoP, determines the empowerment of its individual members.

Part (iii)

Motivation

Motivation is a thoroughly researched aspect of learning and behaviour and the emergent theories provide powerful insights into the various means by which individuals learn (for example, Pintrich, 1999; Yeung & McInerney, 2005; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Understanding the motivation of individuals to engage with and persevere with activities that allow them, ultimately, to learn and achieve, is an important cornerstone of the process of deconstructing the learning process. It can also be said that recognising those impediments to the motivation of learners also deepens our understanding of the nature of the learning process. Individual learners display different motivational tendencies towards different types of tasks at different times within various learning and social settings and it is necessary to consider these tendencies, with reference to current theories of motivation, in order to improve our understanding of learning contexts.

Fundamental to this end, it is considered necessary to explore the meaning of the term 'motivation'. At its most elemental, motivation can be defined as 'the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way' or 'the general desire or willingness of someone to do something' (both, 2005, Oxford English Dictionary). Although accepting straightforward definitions such as these are useful guidelines in normal discourse, a more thorough working definition is required for the purposes of academic research: one that

accommodates both the means and reasons why motivation may develop over time, within different social and group settings.

It is generally agreed that, for many individuals, motivation changes significantly over time (e.g. Jacobs & Newstead, 2000; Elliott *et al*, 2001; Anderman & Maehr, 1994) and this tendency to change becomes highly relevant in research where the motivations of school pupils and students are explored in depth. For example, teachers are frequently concerned regarding the lowering in levels of motivation commonly observed in adolescent boys, with such decreasing motivation frequently manifesting itself as underachievement and deteriorating attitudes and behaviour (Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Doddington, Flutter & Rudduck, 1999). In addition to such temporal changes, it is also seen that motivation is not a static phenomenon, existing in isolation from social and learning contexts (Yeung & McInerney, 2005). Dörnyei (2000) in his exploration of motivation as a process rather than a product, defines motivation in the following way :

The dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out.

(Dörnyei, 2000, p. 524)

Therefore, a comprehensive theory of motivation, which accommodates the changing nature of motivation is required to provide a theoretical backdrop to

this study. Such a theory needs to be expressed in terms of different modes of participation in a learning community's practices (Wenger, 1998) and should elucidate how practices evolve over time and explain how such changes influence the development of an individual's learning identity.

Different motivational theories focus on various aspects of the learner's behaviour and attitudes and endeavours to describe how these, in turn, affect learning outcomes within defined situations. The main theories are discussed in the following sections.

Achievement Goal Theory

A substantial body of research has explored achievement goal theories, where it is posited that learners' attitudes and behaviours are largely governed by the type of goals they pursue in their learning careers (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Ames, 1992). In this context, a goal :

defines an integrated pattern of beliefs, attributions, and affect that produces the intentions of behaviour ... represented by different ways of approaching, engaging in, and responding to achievement-type activities

(Ames, 1992, p. 261)

Understanding the nature of a goal, actively pursued by an individual, provides more information than when analysing any goal that has been successfully achieved. The learning trajectory of such an individual can be interpreted in the

context of that individual's preferred style of learning, his or her past experiences, beliefs and expectations.

Dweck & Leggett (1988) highlight two dominant achievement goals that individuals pursue when engaging with their own learning:

Mastery goals are seen to be pursued by learners who wish to improve their mastery and understanding of a specific task. Individuals who pursue mastery goals (also called task or learning goals) believe that success exists as a consequence of effort and frequently elect to perform challenging tasks. In order to achieve mastery goals, individuals assume a range of effective learning strategies and adopt different strategies, which serve to improve the individual's competence and to 'promote intellectual growth' (Dweck, 1986, p. 1043). Learners who align themselves with mastery goals are frequently self-regulating and self-determining and consider the learning process to be a phenomenon over which they can exercise a significant degree of control (Seifert, 1997). Individuals who pursue mastery goals are unlikely to be anxious about failure, which they consider a normal feature of the iterative process of learning, and hence a valuable, albeit temporary, component of the exploration of different learning strategies.

Performance (or ego or social comparison) goals are pursued by individuals wishing to outperform their peers by demonstrating their success through achievement, rather than the method they use to attain such achievement. Individuals who pursue performance goals share a perception that it is with

personal ability, rather than with effort, that the key to success is associated and, as they perceive ability to be a fixed characteristic, are not of the opinion that expending much effort is necessary. In general, such individuals avoid challenging tasks, where they have the potential to be seen by their peers to struggle or fail. They are frequently seen to be learners anxious regarding their perceived lack of ability and consequently adopt superficial and ineffective learning strategies, such as rote learning, in order to achieve their goals (Meece *et al*, 1988). Such learners who pursue performance goals often do so as a consequence of having experienced personal failure and embarrassment in the past and perceive themselves to be of low ability. In order to avoid experiencing negative feelings with respect to their learning, they align themselves with undemanding tasks, where there is a greater potential to succeed. However, their reluctance to take risks and to experiment with different learning strategies means that their learning is frequently associated with anxiety and will be significantly curtailed.

The pursuit of both types of goal requires further examination, with reference to the types of practices in which individuals participate, as well as the individuals' location within their learning CoPs. Individuals who pursue mastery goals display the characteristics of those CoP members who negotiate and engage in practices that support their inbound and insider learning trajectories and who have adopted and negotiated practices that enhance the development of their learning identity (Wenger, 1998). Consequently, they perceive their learning experiences as empowering and this supports future meaningful participation within their communities which they believe will

empower them further. In contrast, individuals who tend to pursue performance goals tend to be marginal participants who have experienced difficulties in engaging fully with learning practices. Their desire to appear empowered as learners with respect to their fellow members results in their pursuit of practices that other members may not consider to be meaningful and this results in their continued marginalisation (Meece *et al*, 1988).

Attribution Theory

This theory focuses on the cause that an individual attributes to a particular outcome, in particular learning outcomes. Learners may attribute factors such as effort, ability, practical skills, luck, illness, noisy classroom, standard of teaching and their relationship with the teacher, as being causal in determining whether or not they succeed while learning a particular task. These perceptions, in turn, engender emotions within the learner, that affect future motivation and expectations (Weiner, 1985).

In order to understand how attributions affect motivation, it is necessary to consider both their characteristics and the nature of the emotions that they produce within an individual. Weiner (1984, 1985) gives consideration to three main characteristics of attributions :

- the location of the cause of the attribution. For example, effort is often perceived to be within the individual, whilst problems with computers are to be found outside of the individual.
- the stability of the cause of the attribution. For instance, ability can be perceived by the individual as being a stable and permanent feature, while illness can be considered as a non-stable feature that affected learning.
- the controllability of the individual over the cause of the attribution. The learner can be seen to exert control over the amount of effort they place into a task, but may feel unable to control a class that is over-noisy and makes it difficult for them to concentrate successfully on a task.

The manner in which an individual perceives and responds emotionally to these causes is seen to have a direct influence on that individual's motivation and behaviour (Weiner, 1984, 1985). Learners who attribute their successes to internal and controllable causes tend to show confidence and are effective learners who engage in and persevere with challenging tasks. They generally complete tasks to a high standard. Such learners also tend to be proud of their achievements and have high expectations for success (Weiner, 1985). However, pupils who attribute their successes to external factors over which they perceive themselves to have little control, tend not to gain confidence and lack the same sense of achievement as learners who perceive themselves to be in control of the causes of attribution. Even after completing their tasks to a high standard, they tend not to feel in full control of their learning and are

unlikely to be prepared to persevere when faced with tasks of a challenging nature (Weiner, 1985). Individuals who attribute failure to internal, stable, uncontrollable factors, such as low ability, tend not to engage meaningfully with their tasks and have a propensity to feel ashamed of their failures. Consequently, such individuals tend not to expend a great deal of effort in completing tasks which they perceive as being futile (Weiner, 1985).

The emotional responses arising from an individual's past learning experiences are seen as being significant determinants of that individual's future participation in the learning process (Pekrun *et al*, 2002). Learning experiences can engender complex feelings within individuals, both positive and negative in nature, and these emotions are often closely related to the motivation and achievement of the individuals concerned (Pekrun *et al*, *ibid.*). Pupils having experienced positive emotions in this context are often eager to replicate those emotions when undertaking future learning tasks and are seen to engage deeply with those activities. In contrast, pupils having experienced negative emotions often wish to avoid future potential disappointments and anxieties and believe that non-engagement with an activity protects them from further potential failures (Pekrun *et al*, *ibid.*).

Contextualising the means by which a learner attributes his/her learning successes or failures, together with the underlying emotional responses within a CoP framework, reflects the central importance of the individual's past learning identity trajectories and his/her perceptions of empowerment within his/her learning CoPs (Wenger, 1998). A learner's attribution of success or failure

highlights the degree and mode of participation in her/his CoPs as well as her/his sense of empowerment in negotiating learning when faced with factors, both within and outside her/his CoPs, that may support or undermine her/him as a learner (Weiner, 1985; Wenger, *ibid.*).

Self-Worth Theory.

This theory seeks to explain how a learner's motivation to engage in tasks is driven by that individual's desire to protect his/her sense of self-worth (Covington, 1984). Central to this theory is the learner's perception of his/her own worth and value as a person within a particular social setting. A person having a high degree of self-worth perceives they are respected and valued by others within that social setting, whereas a person who perceives they have little self-worth, often feels disrespected and of little value to others.

In a school setting, a pupil's sense of self worth is being negotiated constantly within that particular community, and the manner in which pupils who succeed or fail are treated at school is instrumental in this process of negotiation. To illustrate this, pupils who experience academic, cultural or sports successes, receive recognition of their efforts and abilities, and such recognition, in turn, enhances their sense of self-worth. Conversely, other pupils who are seen not to have shared similar successes at school often feel their efforts are under-valued and perceive a decrease of their sense of self- worth (Seifert, 2004). Not only does such perceived success or failure have a bearing on the relative self-worth of pupils, but a common implied message is seen to be transmitted within that

setting, that pupils who succeed are 'deemed more worthy than those who do not do well' (Seifert, 2004, pp. 141) and this has potentially far-reaching implications for the self-worth of all pupils at that school and within other sectors of society.

The level and nature of past performance in completing various activities can be a significant determinant of an individual's perception of self-worth and this in turn, determines how an individual faces future tasks and her/his expectations of success. Arguing that self-worth is closely related to performance and achievement, Covington (1984) demonstrates that individuals strive to protect their own sense of self-worth, in accordance with how they value themselves as individuals. Individuals who experience successful learning outcomes, either because of a perceived sense of high ability or through high levels of effort, also feel pride in their achievements and often expect to succeed again when addressing future tasks. When pupils succeed at their tasks, it reaffirms their sense of self-worth and, as a result, maintains or improves such perceptions of self-worth, thus driving forward personal motivation in readiness for future challenges (Seifert, 2004).

Those learners who experience failure as a result of low effort often feel guilty because of their poor performance, however, perceptions of self-worth are not always undermined in such cases, as pupils are able to persuade themselves that, had they expended more effort completing their tasks, success would have been forthcoming (Thompson & Perry, 2005). However, learners who have experienced failure, despite expending considerable effort in completing their

tasks, often perceive themselves to be of low ability. Their low sense of self-worth is compounded by the frustrations and embarrassment felt through failing to perform adequately (Seifert, 2004; Thompson & Perry, 2005) and this has a significant negative effect on future motivation to learn.

The greatest insight into self-worth protection can be seen by studying learners who experience failure with their tasks (Seifert, 2004; Thompson & Perry, 2005). To such individuals, who often fear academic failure, the process of being seen to fail by others, as a consequence of a lack of effort, is perceived as being preferable to the process of being seen to fail through low ability. Here, feelings of guilt regarding lack of effort are less threatening to the individual's self-worth than are feelings of shame and degradation associated with perceptions of low ability (Covington, 1984; Thompson & Perry, 2005). Consequently, individuals who fear academic failure adopt 'failure avoiding strategies' (Seifert, 2004, pp. 141) which include withdrawing effort or setting personal goals which are impossible to achieve; this is not the same as avoiding failure at tasks. Their sense of self-worth is thus protected when they fail to achieve and they are able to attribute poor performance to lack of effort or to the pursuit of unachievable goals (Thompson & Perry, 2005).

Self-worth theory clearly demonstrates motivation to be driven by the individual's learning identity, sense of empowerment as a learner as well as her/his ability to negotiate new practices to protect the learner's self-identity. Influencing and negotiating practices reflects the individual's learning trajectory both within his/her CoPs as well as within his/her learning institution and this

clearly defines their power status within these different settings (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, self-worth theory highlights the centrality of the relationships between members of a CoP and how members who consider themselves to be marginalised adopt practices to ensure that their membership is not jeopardised by factors that they consider to be secondary to their perception of their identity. Successful learners whose self worth is enhanced by their positive learning experiences pursue an inward learning trajectory where their participation becomes more meaningful and their membership of their learning CoPs becomes firmer (Wenger, *ibid.*). However, learners who have experienced failure may develop practices that protect rather than enhance their individual learning identities although this may not always benefit the CoP as a whole. Consequently, individuals who engage in such behaviour, although believing themselves to be empowered through their actions, may in fact marginalise themselves from that particular practice (Wenger, *ibid.*).

Self-efficacy theory.

The theory, which relates to notions of the self-efficacy of individuals, is seen to focus on the learners' feelings and perceptions of confidence and their perceived capability to perform specific tasks (Bandura, 1993). A learner's belief regarding their ability to complete specific tasks, to certain standards, is seen as a measure of his/her self-efficacy and is closely related to that learner's experiences in the context of achievement, performance and perception of self-worth. Pupils who are efficacious will often undertake challenging tasks with confidence, employing several effective strategies in order to complete their

tasks. However, pupils who are not efficacious often perceive themselves incapable of performing similar work, frequently avoiding challenging tasks and favouring simpler endeavours, which require minimal skills to secure completion (Bandura, 1993). Thus, self-efficacy theory should also be considered in terms of individuals' perceptions of their learning identity and the historical trajectory that they have experienced as learners (Wenger, 1998).

Self-efficacy is also to be considered a measure of a learner's empowerment, as a consequence of her/his ability to integrate knowledge into her/his learning identity (Wenger, 1998, *ibid.*). Individuals with high self-efficacy are often seen to have developed powerful learning identities, which reflect their successful participation in the CoPs of which they are members. In contrast to such situations, those individuals with low self-efficacy perceive themselves as marginalised participants, with fragile learning identities as a consequence of an ineffectual experience of integrating knowledge (Wenger, *ibid.*).

In general, the theory appears to provide adequate explanation of the behaviours and motivations of learners who are either highly efficacious or are lacking in efficacy as learners, but does not seem to provide entirely satisfactory explanations regarding all pupils. Some learners are seen to perceive themselves to be of low ability, but are still seen to be sufficiently motivated to expend effort in completing a difficult task. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to observe a pupil, who is not low in ability and is aware of that fact that she/he is capable of success, who fails to be motivated to achieve academically; it can be seen that several schools face the continuous challenge of endeavouring to motivate

substantial numbers of such pupils. By oversimplifying and over-generalizing categories of learners into mutually exclusive groups, such as the efficacious and non-efficacious learners, the theory fails to provide adequate explanations regarding the behaviours and motivations of a significant number of learners unable to fit neatly into such categories of learners.

However, Seifert (2004) argues that consideration of a self-efficacy theory, in conjunction with a self-worth theory, provides a more substantial explanation. Pupils with low self-efficacy are often eager to protect their self-worth by adopting self-worth protective strategies in order to deflect attention from their perceived low ability. Furthermore, Seifert (*ibid.*) refers to a pupil who, upon commencement of a test, realises that it is too difficult and resorts to activities such as misbehaving and intentionally performing poorly in the test. The pupil's low self-efficacy guided his self-worth protective actions, and, although he may have been reprimanded for his poor performance in the test, his self-worth would not have been seriously threatened. Additionally, the pupil may consider that his standing amongst his peers had benefited from his behaviour (Seifert, *ibid.*).

Motivation and Social Goals

Having explored the types of beliefs and emotions that learners hold as a consequence of their learning experiences, it now proposed to explore the social factors that affect individual motivation. Of particular interest are social goals defined as: 'perceived social purposes for academic achievement' (Urdan

& Maehr, 1995, pp. 213). Therefore, rather than seeking to understand why learners are motivated (or not) to learn, what is of interest here is what learners are trying to achieve (Wentzel, 1989, 1993) and the educational outcomes that are valued by them.

Social goals are seen to be numerous and diverse in nature and can involve seeking the social approval of others within a CoP (e.g. peers, family, teachers), complying with expected social practices and standards (e.g. family and peers), solidarity with an immediate peer or friendship group, and altruism (Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Wenger, 1998). These types of social goals are often seen to be reliant upon other, wider, social factors and can affect considerably a learner's motivation to learn.

During adolescence, children's friendship groups are seen to convey substantial effects upon the values of the individual members of that group, and critically affect the means by which individual children negotiate their social and learning positions (Jackson, 2002). Furthermore, Duffield *et al* (2000) demonstrate that the social negotiations facing pupils during early years at secondary school are perceived as being far more important to pupils than their pedagogic experiences. At the same time, pupils are often seen to conform more closely to the values held by members of friendship groups, than to values held by their parents (Coleman, 1961). Contextualising these negotiations within a child's CoPs, it is seen that the development of an individual's learning identity and sense of power is closely related to her/his alignment with the perceived

endeavours of her/his CoPs as well as the degree of influence she/he may exert over the CoP's evolving practices (Wenger, 1998)

The relationships that pupils develop with their teachers are also indicative of the types of social goals pursued by individuals. It is accepted that the majority of teacher/pupil relationships are supportive in nature, with both teacher and pupil pursuing common goals of achievement by engaging in effective teaching and learning practices (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). In situations where learners are seen to be either unwilling, or unable, to participate in a community's learning practices, the teacher, being an established member of that community, occupies a crucial role. Younger & Warrington (1996) demonstrate that, in classes where positive and supportive relationships exist between teacher and pupils, pupil behaviour and motivation tends to be good. The converse has also been observed where a high degree of disengagement amongst pupils may be seen as well as low motivation and achievement. Classroom participation significantly determines to what degree a child will achieve / underachieve (Myhill, 2002); however, it is not clear whether lack of participation is a symptom of, or a cause of low achievement.

A pupil's motivation is greatly influenced by how well that pupil is accepted by her/his peers and by the dominant values of the peer groups themselves, be they friendship groups, classroom groups or other groups outside school (Day, 1996; Wigfield, *et al*, 1998). In negotiating membership of peer groups, children are seen to both desire and to need social approval from children with whom they identify and whose behaviour they perceive to be similar to their own.

Importantly, such peers are able to provide information to children regarding individual competencies (Berndt & Keefe (1996). Friendship group membership is iterative in nature and results in the reinforcement and perpetuation of an individual member's identity and self-image (Epstein, 1983; Younger & Warrington, 1996). It is therefore believed that the formation of friendship groups is of central importance to the socialization process of school pupils, where the dominant values of each particular group both reflect and confirm the collective motivation and values placed on the education process by its members (Jenkins, 1996; Wigfield, *et al*, 1998).

This argument is further developed by Day (1996) in her exploration of the way social interactions between friends and their wider peers determine a specific friendship group's collective attitude towards learning. Members of friendship groups displaying 'learning enhanced' (p. 55) attitudes were seen to recognise the importance of educational success and effort, were supportive of each other's learning goals and frequently exchanged ideas in order to advance their individual and collective learning careers. In such cases, belonging to a high-achieving friendship group is seen to drive and increase motivation and achievement, as group members support and sometimes compete in order to enhance and reaffirm group membership (Day, 1996). This suggests the pursuance of performance goals by group members (Anderman & Maehr, 1994) although it is not known whether this is exclusive in nature.

In contrast, 'learning diminished' (Day, 1996, p. 55) friendship groups often display tensions existing between social interactions and individual learning.

where concerns with image and social status often supersede positive attitudes towards learning, However, Day (*ibid.*) also notes that not all members display negative attitudes towards learning, some develop coping mechanisms by distancing themselves from some of their friends. Members of low achieving peer groups, through engagement in anti-learning behaviour may reaffirm their alienation from the educational system by their repeated failure to achieve academically and become more unmotivated as a result (Berndt & Keefe, 1996) however, their image and social status within that friendship group may be boosted as a result (Day 1996).

In order to understand the effects of social goals on the development of learning identities, friendship groups need to be considered as CoPs whose purposes and practices have been negotiated over time to reflect the collective views of the members. Additionally, the individual's influence in the development of practices demonstrates his/her state of empowerment with respect to the practices in which he/she participates. Practices evolve to reflect the reified views of the members and these views underpin the community's expectations and values (Wenger, 1998). Individuals, as members of several CoPs may find their learning identities enhanced or compromised as a consequence of engaging in practices that may, or may not, be convergent in the merit they attribute to engaging in learning practices.

Summary of Chapter.

In this chapter, literature relating to motivation, pupil voice and Communities of Practice has been discussed to provide a theoretical context to the study. Motivation is frequently considered as a psychological phenomenon that is driven by an individual's expectations, emotions and self-efficacy in the pursuit of various goals. Individuals frequently engage in self-worth protective strategies in a learning setting and these determine whether participation in learning is meaningful or not; such strategies should also be considered as practices in which the individual engages with respect to learning. It is important to recognise that self-worth protective strategies are essentially employed within specific social settings, so motivation should be considered as a phenomenon that possesses both social and psychological qualities. This underlines Wenger's (1998) argument in favour of a social theory of learning, in which he emphasises the centrality of social settings and interactions, and forms a rigorous framework within which social elements of motivation are considered.

Engaging with pupil voice is seen as a means by which individual learners inform the ongoing debate relating to their own learning and motivation; however, the process of giving a voice to an individual or group requires that the ethical issues of legitimacy and authority of both seeking and being given a voice should be addressed. Furthermore, integrating 'voice' into the analytical stage and as a means of confirming the study findings is seen as a means of perpetuating the presence of participants' voices in the entire research process. Maintaining a high degree of accountability to participants throughout the study

is seen as an effective way of ensuring that participants retain ownership of their data and this is considered to be a practice through which they become empowered.

Chapter 3.

Methods and Methodology

Rationale for choice of methodology

It was essential to locate this study on the qualitative / quantitative continuum prior to commencement so as to minimise any potential redundancy during both data gathering and analysis stages. This was achieved by giving consideration to the field to be studied, the type of data to be generated and the analysis and interpretation of the findings (Cohen & Mannion, 1994). In the literature review, I have referred to the characteristics of motivation to be explored, and stated that they relate mainly to motivation as a sociological construct, reflecting pupils' subjective values, learning experiences and identities. Pupils' attitudes were not measured in any comparative or quantifiable manner; consequently, the field of study required a qualitative approach.

Given the centrality of pupil voice in this study, it was essential to select the most appropriate method of gathering data to ensure that proper status was given to those voices. It was also important to recognise the significance of the social setting of the research, not only as the location where the interviews took place and where the data was constructed, but also as a backdrop which was instrumental in the formation of pupils' experiences and views during their learning histories. The meanings constructed in the interviews were both socially embedded in, and reflective of the settings in which the interviews took

place (Phillips, 1989, Schofield, 1989). A qualitative approach seemed to be appropriate for such exploration.

Data analysis was undertaken by conducting a thematic analysis (Joffe & Yardley, 2003) within a CoP theoretical framework (Wenger, 1998) where emphasis was placed on the contextualisation of the data. Themes, identified as critical determinants of pupils' learning identities and motivation, were examined as the means by which pupils participated in learning and their wider practices, both within and without Ysgol Tremorfa's community. Such analysis needed to be qualitative in nature.

This study has, therefore, been undertaken from a qualitative perspective in all respects and its findings should be considered accordingly.

Study Design

Conducting a study in the school in which I taught required me to consider both practical as well as ethical implications of conducting insider research. Having decided upon a purely qualitative study, the methodological framework needed to accommodate the type of questions I wished to explore, the means by which I intended to gather my data, the analytical methods I was to employ as well as the setting and participants of the study. Acknowledging the uniqueness of the study setting, I felt no compulsion to undertake a study that would be widely generalizable to other settings (Eisner, 1992; Stake, 1994). Furthermore, I do not claim that the views of the pupils interviewed reflect the views of the majority of school pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa. Similarities and differences in pupils' views contribute to the richness of the study; minority views were not relegated in favour of the majority and a consensual view was not sought.

By adopting a case study approach, it was possible to ensure that pupils' responses reflected both their views and the context within which they held and developed those opinions. This was essential in a study where pupil voice was explored within a Communities of Practice framework (Wenger, 1998). In a case study that reflected the social processes and practices of all its participants, over a significant period of time, it became possible to explore the development of pupils' views and histories within the timescale of that study, thus contributing to its unique flavour and character (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). Furthermore, Kemmis (1980) describes a case study not only as a

process of enquiry but also as a product of inquiry. This was to prove an increasingly important aspect of the research, where it was decided to integrate pupil voice into various stages as a means of validating the researcher's interpretations.

Having read literature relating to Case Studies (e.g. Cohen & Mannion, 1994; Gillham, 2000; Stake, 1994; Stake, 2005), it was decided that a combination of intrinsic and collective case study methods would enable the research to reach its objectives. An initial aim was to explore, in substantial depth, individual pupils' views and life-stories in order to identify how factors relating to motivation and identity were contextualised in the child's character and experiences. Failure to explore these contexts could potentially have resulted in a partial and superficial representation of each pupil. An intrinsic case study approach was suitable in this respect owing to its emphasis on the specific case and, to this end, each pupil was defined as a single case. Secondly, the study aimed to gather a varied set of responses from pupils with respect to the central issues of motivation, relationships, and schooling. A collective case study approach was deemed suitable for the purpose of investigating particular phenomena within a specific population.

Although intrinsic and collective case study methods place opposing emphases on the particular case, the central status of 'voice' in the study, representing both individual and collective views, required the research to draw together features from both methods. This concurs with Stake's (2005) view that the boundaries between the different types of case studies are not always distinct and, because

of this, the purpose of the study may require the researcher to employ more than one approach in order to achieve the research objectives. Comparisons of pupils' views were conducted in substantial depth in order to explore specific issues, such as experiences of being bullied, and to deepen an understanding of those issues. It was not intended to formulate a hierarchy of issues reflecting the number of times such issues were referred to.

Selection of pupils.

As an insider researcher, the researcher was already familiar with many of the pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa and this had distinct advantages when inviting fourteen pupils ($g = 7$, $b = 7$) to participate. Given the small sample size, it was decided not to employ statistical sampling methods (Stake, 2005) and the selection was largely opportunistic, based on previous knowledge of the pupils concerned. Certain pupils had been taught by the researcher at some point in their school careers, while other pupils had been suggested as possible candidates by their Heads of Year, as either underachievers or as marginalised pupils. The Heads of Year provided more names than required and were not informed who the study participants were.

During the selection process, it was endeavoured to find pupils with the ability to express themselves freely in order to facilitate the sharing of experiences with the researcher. The sample did not include those who were exceptionally gifted or had severe learning difficulties (although one pupil had been diagnosed as

dyslexic) in an effort to explore the experiences of mainstream pupils. By interviewing a small but varied sample of pupils, it was possible to explore their diverse backgrounds, values and aspirations, in substantial depth, thus underlining the intrinsic dimension of the research (Stake, 2005). This allowed an intensive study of each individual child, in order to collate their experiences without having to compare their meanings against a larger group, to verify, negate or quantify the relevance of what they shared.

Interviewing Pupils

In their exploration of different types of interviews, Cohen & Mannion (1994) & May (1997) examine the characteristics relating to each type of interview and the type of data that can be generated from such interviews. Locating interviews on a continuum, with quantitative and qualitative data at opposite ends, each type of interview reflects the nature and focus of questions asked, the nature of the responses allowed or required from the respondents, the degree of flexibility that the interviewer is granted, the positioning of power between the interviewer and respondent and the breadth and depth of information that can be generated in the such interviews.

Each pupil was asked to respond to the same set of questions (see Appendix 2) but no limit whatsoever was set upon their responses, as would be the case in a purely structured interview. From early readings (for example, Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Dörnyei, 2000; Duffield *et al*, 2000, Wenger, 1998; Lave &

Wenger, 1991), areas were identified for exploration during interviews. These related to the pupils' participation in different CoPs (Wenger, 1998) and necessitated an exploration of perceptions of identity, schooling, learning, motivation and relationships with family members, peers and teachers and these areas were to be explored through open questions. It was clear that semi-structured interviews, combining features from both structured and unstructured interviews, would provide the researcher with this latitude (May, 1997).

Following each interview, the researcher recorded in the Research Log the way each pupil had responded and whether or not they had indicated, by displaying powerful emotions or by emphasising certain expressions (Fontana & Frey, 2005), that certain issues were deemed suitable for exploration in further depth in future. Additionally, to broaden the remit of this study and to promote the status of pupil voice, individuals were encouraged to explore issues they felt were important to themselves and potentially to the remaining study cohort. In effect, the data gathered determined the direction of future interviews and hence the nature of subsequent data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Examples of such topics were:

- the effect of classroom noise on pupil participation in learning.
- the attribution of the causes of difficulties in maintaining motivation and engagement during lessons .
- how pupils trust their teachers or why they mistrust other teachers.

- the importance of respect between pupils and teachers in promoting motivation.
- the degree of support offered to victims of bullying.

These matters were incorporated into the interview schedules and explored with each pupil during subsequent interviews. Providing pupils with opportunities to influence the study agenda, further enriching its findings, was seen as a means of empowerment and of promoting their own voice within the study (Fontana & Frey, 2005); however, this was always completed within the parameters of the original study objectives. As a result, pupils were able to discuss participation in practices within their own CoPs, reflecting their status and modes of belonging to those CoPs and the resulting effect on the development of their learning identity (Wenger, 1998). Certain topics were not explored in depth with each pupil because they did not indicate a specific view on that particular issue, so avoiding speculation and anecdote; rather the discussion was of personal experiences (e.g. some pupils did not have direct experience of bullying). Such anecdotal evidence has potential ‘voice’ implications, when pupils discuss issues on behalf of others and the same weight could not be attributed to such views as is given to the evidence provided by a pupil who had direct experience of a specific phenomenon (Alcoff, 1991).

Each pupil was initially invited to interview, either alone or with a friend. Eight chose to be interviewed individually, whilst six wished to be interviewed as friendship pairs. Pupils who were interviewed in pairs were also interviewed alone at least once to ensure that they did not feel compelled to respond in a particular manner to sensitive questions in the presence of their friends (e.g. exploring the effects of family breakdown or bullying) (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The study was mindful to ensure, particularly during early interviews, that pupils were not endeavouring to assess the interviewer's reactions to their responses, or were offering responses that were expected from them. As Fontana & Frey (*ibid.*) suggest, giving children opportunities to talk about their general experiences rather than about specific values during early interviews enabled them to become more relaxed. During subsequent interviews, they showed more confidence whilst sharing views and responded freely and with less prompting to questioning in greater depth. The majority of the interviews lasted 20 to 30 minutes and each pupil was interviewed for a total of 3 – 4 hours over the period of the study, until saturation was achieved. A list of dates and topics covered in each interview, with each pupil, is provided in Appendix 3.

During early paired interviews, it was ensured that both pupils responded to each question asked (Fontana & Frey, 2005). This was achieved by asking each individual pupil specifically to respond to every question. These prompts by the interviewer became less frequent as the study progressed, the pupils themselves were seen to provide each other with further opportunities to respond and often continued their own dialogue without further prompts or intervention. Discussions between participants have been seen to provide a rich source of

data, not only through their content but also through the manner in which that content is shared (Fontana & Frey, *ibid*) and this was recorded in the Research Log. However, Fontana & Frey (*ibid.*) also caution that data originating in a group/pair interview cannot always be generalised widely owing to the unique context and make-up of the group/pair setting. This was not considered of direct relevance or as a problem in this study, as it only sought to ascertain an insight into the views of a specific group of individuals, within a particular context, rather than widely generalized findings.

Interviews are seen to be locations of inherent power inequalities, where the researcher/interviewer selects the participants, location and time of the interview, also delineating the research focus and establishing the agenda (May, 1997). The power inequality is further intensified during the analytical process, when the researcher selects both the actual responses to be discussed and the manner in which they are analysed (Fontana & Frey, 2005). However, interviews may also empower respondents by giving them a voice (Fontana & Frey, *ibid.*) and the researcher endeavoured to allow such empowerment to permeate the body of this study. The purpose of the study was fully explained to each pupil when invited to participate and, before commencement, the topics to be covered during individual interviews were explained. Each pupil was reminded at the beginning of each interview that they could choose not to answer questions, should they not wish to do so. Following every interview, each respondent was provided with a transcript of the interview for any comments or amendments they might wish to provide (Pahl, 1995), thus ensuring that she/he was content with the way her/his views were represented in

the study. Enabling respondents to maintain a significant degree of ownership of the content of interviews is an important factor in reducing the power inequalities inherent in such situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When individuals indicated that the transcriptions and notes were accurate, it was then possible to conduct initial analysis by identifying issues that needed further exploration with the individual concerned, as well as discussing matters that should be explored with all participants.

As the study progressed, new CoPs (Wenger, 1998) were seen to develop between researcher and pupils as a consequence of taking part in interviews, with new identities produced in specific researcher/participant settings. These new identities also manifested themselves, on occasion, in a general classroom setting, when pupils referred to something they had previously mentioned in interview, or in the context of a private joke between pupil and teacher.

Supplementary Information

During the final stages of the study, all pupils were invited to write a brief profile of themselves in their own words, where they were encouraged to share those experiences and interests they considered important in their lives. This would enable pupils to provide a view, after due consideration, of the person they believed themselves to be and to derive a personal sense of empowerment from introducing themselves, rather than having to be introduced by a third party. Pseudonyms were provided when pupils referred to family members or

friends, in order to protect the identities of all parties. Twelve of the fourteen pupils provided profiles and they are included in Appendix 1.

Each pupil was also invited to discuss his/her thoughts regularly with the researcher (in addition to the scheduled interviews) and to share anything he/she considered to be of consequence with respect to his/her participation within the study. For example, individuals were invited to share their responses with the researcher, following the completion of a substantial piece of work or test that had been marked by their teacher. Although such issues would have been discussed in greater detail during subsequent interview, obtaining a child's immediate response (e.g. elation or disappointment) was a valuable addition to the general perception of herself/himself with respect to her/his schoolwork. This immediacy of response further developed the emerging researcher/interviewee relationship and a new CoP (Wenger, 1998) between researcher and the pupils. However, in some cases, it was necessary to respond, in part, as a teacher in order to provide additional academic and pastoral support for the pupil concerned. In terms of the study, this was not considered problematic as good research enables the researcher fully to support participants in their needs, as well as to learn from their shared experiences.

Consent and Ethical Considerations

Before the research began, permission was sought and received from the School Management Team (SMT) and Governors to conduct the study at Ysgol Tremorfa, to interview a sample of pupils and to use the school's external examinations data, in order to provide the academic context of the study. The identities of the pupils interviewed were known only to myself and I confirmed to the SMT and governors that neither the school nor pupils would be identified in my thesis. This was acceptable to all parties.

Prior to interview, written consent was obtained from each pupil concerned and from relevant parents or guardians (see Appendix 7) and it was also explained to each pupil that they should not feel compelled to take part in the study and could withdraw at any time, should they wish to do so (Masson, 2004). An assurance of participant confidentiality was provided at the outset with the proviso that, should anything be shared that indicated a pupil was in a potentially harmful situation, then my professional responsibilities as a teacher superseded the research objectives and any necessary action would be taken with their prior knowledge (Masson, *ibid.*). All the pupils accepted this proviso. As recommended by Masson (*ibid.*), the pupils were given outlines of the objectives of the interviews to be conducted, in order to reduce any potential teacher/researcher and pupil inequality and to provide individuals with an opportunity to develop thoughts and ideas on the subject to be explored; demonstrating transparency in the research process enabled the participants to retain ownership of their contributions (Masson, *ibid.*).

The teacher/pupil relationship in a classroom situation is one that is inherently based on power inequalities, and one of the disadvantages of being an insider researcher is that these inequalities have a potentially significant bearing on the nature of interview itself. Such pre-existing power inequalities can often be exacerbated in a one-to-one interview, whereas the child has previously felt more protected in a classroom situation amongst a number of other pupils (Masson, 2004). The teacher/researcher has a responsibility to minimise this power inequality and ensure it is not exploited in any way, and that children perceive themselves and the researcher as equal participants in the research process. By adopting a collaborative approach (EdD Programme Guide, 2004) to the information gathering process in this study, it was considered possible to reduce this power inequality and provide the interviews with the potential to be an empowering experience for the pupils.

Being an insider researcher conveys to the practitioner both privileges and responsibilities. The teacher/researcher was already conversant with the practices and ethos of the school concerned and was familiar with the majority of the pupils in the study. However, being aware of the dangers of over-familiarisation with the study setting and of initial assumptions with respect to the school, the pupil population in general and the pupil sample in particular needed to be well understood by the researcher. Conducting research in an institution where the interviewer held employment necessitated a differentiation between the roles of teacher and researcher and it became essential to adopt an analytical distance in order to produce a situation that was

‘anthropologically strange’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.8). Insider and outsider researchers experience different perceptions of the same situation and potentially react differently in such situations (Hammersley & Atkinson, *ibid.*). In an interview situation, an insider researcher could accept a respondent’s statement without further exploration in the belief that she has understood what the respondent was saying because of her familiarity with the child / situation. An outsider, on the other hand, in the same situation, might ask the respondent to elaborate on a particular point, in order to ensure that she has fully understood what was said.

It was crucial to define the location of the researcher on the insider/outsider continuum in order to contextualise her perspectives and subjectivities (Hellawell, 2006). As a practitioner at Ysgol Tremorfa, the researcher was considered an insider, with a thorough knowledge of school functions, policies and practices, with direct access to pupil statistics and information, and a teacher/pupil relationship was seen to have already been established with a number of research participants. As a researcher, it became desirable to create a distance from the school’s practices in order to gain a more objective view of their meanings and effects on children’s learning. It therefore became desirable to adopt an outsider’s position in this context. As an adult researcher and teacher, the researcher was seen as an outsider from the perspective of the pupils’ world, whose views reflected both maturity and life experiences different from their own. When analysing and discussing data collected, the researcher was both insider, having been involved subjectively in the construction of that data, and outsider, endeavouring to stand back objectively

from the immediately obvious and to reflect on underlying themes. As the study progressed, the researcher was seen increasingly to adopt an outsider stance and the researcher voice evolved into that of an outsider, observing and interpreting that which was occurring, by seeking a more balanced understanding than could have been achieved through retaining a significant insider perspective (Hellawell, *ibid.*).

Thematic Analysis of the Data

The primary data sources within this study were interview transcripts, supplemented by the pupils' self-written profiles (Appendix 1) with notes, recorded in my Research Log, detailing a pupil's general demeanour during interview in addition to any events which potentially affected the flow of any discussion during the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Whereas the main research questions concentrated on how pupils' experiences influenced the development of learning identities and motivation, it had been necessary to formulate sets of sub-questions for possible discussion in order to facilitate a rich and detailed representation of each individual pupil. Initial analysis of these transcripts was guided by the questions explored during each interview and excerpts relating to central issues (e.g. feelings of enjoyment or alienation at school) were highlighted on each transcript in order to be considered both individually and collectively. Additionally, issues worthy of further exploration in subsequent interviews were identified at this stage and then incorporated into the general schedule of questions and prompts used (See Appendix 2).

Conducting any form of content analysis obliges the researcher to identify categories and to examine the relationships that may exist between those categories, as well as their relevance to the field being studied (Joffe & Yardley, 2003). In large samples, references to categories within texts may be quantified, in order to formulate a hierarchy from which theories, reflecting those hierarchies, are developed (Joffe & Yardley, *ibid*). Such findings may be considered contentious due to their reliance on frequencies of categories and their de-contextualization (Silverman, 1993). However, such analysis was not deemed appropriate for a study involving fourteen pupils where deeper meanings were to be explored.

Holloway & Jefferson (2000) discuss the importance of retaining quotations within their wider context and for the researcher to familiarise him or herself with the entire interview transcript as a means of ensuring a thorough understanding of meanings. Highlighting the problems inherent in fragmenting qualitative data, they emphasise the importance of locating meanings within their original contexts, to acknowledge:

...the importance of the whole in understanding the part. (p. 57)

This concurs with Cohen & Mannion's (1994) view on thematic analysis where a participant's words remain intact but are used to exemplify themes identified by the researcher. Joffe & Yardley (2003) develop this method further by

describing how such analysis may be considered as a systematic means that allows meanings to be contextualised by:

... adding the advantages of the subtlety and complexity of a truly qualitative analysis (p. 57).

The adoption of such a method enabled the researcher to address the initial objectives of examining pupils' statements within the full context in which they were constructed and to account for the nuances present in individuals' utterances. Individual voices are not seen to lose their impact by becoming submerged in the collective views of the study's participants, although common views may be highlighted when present in the data. Consequently, pupils' quotations have been widely used, in Chapter 4, in order to illustrate the manifestation of meanings relating to the themes explored, in addition to collated views on common themes.

As suggested by Strauss & Corbin (1998) transcript analysis was conducted in an iterative manner, by making repeated comparisons between the highlighted central issues and dominant themes informed by CoP (Wenger, 1998) relating to participation in learning and learning practices. The effects of pupil identities, relationships, learning experiences, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and inclusion in learning were all examined in terms of the CoP themes, which were also designated as being significant determinants of pupils' learning identities and empowerment.

Validity

Validating the entire research process is seen as being an essential part of any study. Maxwell (1992) suggests that separate validation strategies are required for interpretations, theories, generalizations and evaluative judgments. For this particular study, it was also considered that validating translated meanings was of central importance.

In much scientific research, objectivity is considered both necessary and achievable. Educational research, however, by the very nature of its social interactions and because of the interpretation of human behaviour and characteristics, cannot achieve the same degree of objectivity. Eisner (1992) argues that it is neither desirable nor achievable to pursue such a goal, instead believing that an ontologically objective view should be sought, reflecting 'veridicality in both perception and understanding' of reality (p. 50). Participation, by both researcher and the pupils, in research directed practices within developing CoPs (Wenger, 1998) meant that data gathering was heavily mediated and hence subjective in nature, with the researcher/participant roles and relationships, the time and location of the investigation and the questions being investigated, being prominent features within the context in which the research took place. These factors have a significant bearing on the realities being constructed and described by the researcher (Schwandt, 2000). Any interpretation and understanding by the researcher and audience must, therefore, be considered as being tentative at best.

Consequently, a central issue which needed consideration during the design and execution of this particular study was the extent to which the researcher's own subjectivities influenced the questions asked, the data collected and the analysis and interpretation of that data (Phillips, 1989; Scott, 2001). Such subjectivities reflected the researcher's own presuppositions and experiences, the CoPs in which the researcher participated, her status within the institution in which the study was conducted and relationships with pupils and fellow professionals. A high degree of reflexivity was essential in the Research Log and field notes; the role as researcher and the manner of interaction with the pupils, within specific contexts, had to be fully described and accounted for (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

A principal feature of the analysis and interpretation of interview data was the need to acknowledge the way children's statements reflected their own subjectivities and to assess the degree to which their statements reflected their own views. It became important to ask to what extent was the voice heard their own (Alcoff, 1991). The researcher chose to accept that each child, during interview, shared her/his own unique version of the truth at that particular time. The version of reality presented at any time, during the research interviews, was seen to be constructed by both interviewee and interviewer and, because of this, pupils received opportunities, at a later date, to amend or retract any statements with which they were not satisfied (Pahl, 1995). The view was adopted that the way pupils chose to portray themselves and the views presented during interview were to be held as valid, even if it was suspected, at the time, that the children had not been entirely honest with themselves, or had misunderstood a

particular event. Interview transcripts were useful tools for exploring meanings during later interviews, when pupils were given opportunities to elaborate, in greater depth, on a point, giving the researcher ample opportunity to validate further understanding. The accuracy of the statements provided by pupils during interview were not corroborated by third parties (e.g. comparing a pupil's and teacher's version of a specific event) in order not to introduce voices other than those of the pupils concerned.

Validation and interpretation of the analysis were subject to different criteria (Stake, 1994, Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994) and were seen to be significantly determined by the researcher's own subjectivities, judgements and understanding of specific statements and events (Phillips 1989). Consequently, internal validity was central to the study, with emphasis placed on full and consistent descriptions of that which had occurred and the nature of meanings constructed during the interviews (Schofield, 1989).

Qualitative research is often seen to be validated by conducting comparisons between different sets of data, or theories, in order to evaluate the reliability of such data or theories. Stake (2005) states that the process of triangulation is often a valuable process, used to clarify meanings, and this was achieved by encouraging pupils to confirm the researcher's understanding and interpretation of data during various stages of the study. This, in line with the aims of the research, also provided pupils with a voice to express their views. As the research entirely relied on pupil voice, it was not possible to triangulate the data, its analysis or its findings, with any corresponding or relevant external

source. However, it was possible to undertake internal triangulation of the data by referring them directly to the relevant participants during different stages of the study. This became an active process throughout the study in the following way: following interview, pupils were provided with typed transcripts to allow them to confirm, amend or retract their statements in accordance with their wishes (Pahl, 1995). Additionally, translated excerpts of the transcripts were discussed with the participants so that they could verify that their meanings had not been subjected to any significant change during the translation process. During the final stages of the study, when analysis was nearing completion, six pupils (all other participants had left school by that time) were provided with a synopsis of research findings and requested to confirm how closely those findings were seen to reflect their own views. Despite not having encountered such a procedure in any literature studied, it was considered to be a reasonable conclusion to a study that relied exclusively on pupil voice for its content. Pupils were thus able to comment further on the perceived representation of their views within the research and to facilitate a greater sense of ownership over the views they had shared. This is discussed fully in Chapter 5 and the synopsis presented to the pupils may be read in Appendix 6.

Translational Issues

Most of the interviews were conducted through the medium of the Welsh language, the primary language of the majority of the respondents. The natural language of the school and the surrounding area is Welsh and the children converse with each other and their teachers in that language. The majority of lessons in the school are also conducted through the medium of Welsh. Conducting interviews through the medium of the English language, the pupils' secondary language, would have inhibited their responses substantially (Roberts *et al*, 2003) and it is probable that some of the lower ability children would have found it difficult to articulate their ideas through the medium of their second language. The pupils whose primary language is English were all interviewed through the medium of that language.

All interviews were transcribed in their original language, with texts from Welsh language interviews that contained important themes (e.g. relating to effort at school) then translated into English for the purpose of analysis. Pupils were then presented with an English language translation, in addition to a Welsh transcript of the entire interview, and invited to amend any passages they felt did not reflect accurately their intended meanings. Stake (2005) states that incorporating and accounting for local meanings and contexts should be an explicit feature in case study research and his argument is of particular relevance in a bilingual study such as this. It was seen as essential to capture the nature of the language used, as well as the content of what was related by the pupils with the aim of conveying these aspects clearly. All translations also

strived to reflect the cultural context of the participants, in addition to ensuring linguistic integrity (Roberts *et al*, 2003; Shklarov, 2007).

Prior to translating research data from Welsh into English, implications associated with the task were fully discussed with a linguistic expert, Dr Cen Williams, Director, Canolfan Bedwyr, University of Wales, Bangor. During discussions, the importance of translating the meanings of what was said rather than actual words was emphasised. Translations also needed to capture specific pupil expressions, through the use of words compatible with both the vocabulary and idiom of an individual who belonged to a particular age group, ability and background. These parameters directed the translation work undertaken and, when the process was complete, the accuracy and nature of the translated excerpts were further discussed with Dr Sylvia P Jones, Head of Translation Unit at Canolfan Bedwyr, University of Wales, Bangor. During initial discussions and analysis, Dr Jones also emphasised the importance of maintaining meanings during the translation process, rather than translating individual words in a grammatical context. Emphasis was also placed upon the importance of conserving the dynamic equivalence of pupils' quotations by using English language expressions used in interviews that reflected their values and experiences as individuals and which also captured their mode of speech. Translation was considered not only as a means of conveying accurate meaning in a language that was different from the original statement, but also as a process that was in itself socially embedded. Pupils' spoken communications not only conveyed information about their views and experiences but also

confirmed their sense of identity and revealed whom they themselves identified with as individuals (Roberts *et al*, 2003; Shklarov, 2007).

Translated excerpts were validated by Dr Sylvia P Jones, Head of the Translation Unit at Canolfan Bedwyr, University of Wales, Bangor, and following validation, minor amendments and changes were completed. This validation is included in Appendix 4 and is further discussed in Chapter 4.

Summary of Chapter.

This chapter gives consideration to the practical and ethical implications of seeking the views of pupils relating to learning and motivation. In seeking the views of pupils in respect of their learning, it is necessary to consider why and to whom a voice is being given, as well as on whose behalf pupils may speak. Semi-structured interviews provided data that was analysed thematically, with concepts of identity and power forming the main foci.

In a combination of elements of intrinsic and collective case studies, analysis provides opportunities for a comprehensive social contextualisation of the study. This approach provided a practical approach in which concepts of identity and power could be examined within Wenger's (1998) CoP theoretical framework. These methods provide both structured and flexible opportunities for the data generated to create thorough accounts of the social interactions and participation in practices within a particular social context.

Consideration of the implications of conducting research in one's own institution suggested that both insider and outsider stances were inevitable during different stages of the study; however, the analytical process was conducted from an outsider's position with respect to the realities presented by the pupils.

The implications of conducting research through the medium of Welsh and the translation of interview transcripts into English have been explored with the

primary concerns of preserving the integrity of the data and ensuring that pupils maintained ownership of their views. Providing pupils with opportunities to influence the research agenda and verify the findings is seen as a further means of empowering them within the research process.

Chapter 4.

Presentation and analysis of data.

Introduction.

In this chapter, my intention is to conduct and discuss a thematic analysis of pupils' interview transcripts giving proper consideration to their individual and collective views of their schooling and other experiences. The interviews revealed that many common issues were seen to be important by the interviewees, although pupils' views about the relevance of these issues were often diverse in nature.

Undertaking a thematic analysis within a CoP framework (Wenger, 1998), the study focused on the concepts of identity and power as a means of exploring pupils' motivation and their views of learning. Without exception, pupils clearly demonstrated that their relationships with families, peers, friends and teachers, as well as the social interactions they experienced within classrooms and beyond, were seen as important factors. Analysing these relationships and interactions, by considering the identity and empowerment dimensions that underpinned them, would provide a powerful insight into pupil motivation and participation in the learning process.

Translation of data.

As with all languages, the nature of spoken Welsh varies widely according to the geographical location of the speaker, as well as their age, linguistic ability, education and socio-cultural background. Spoken Welsh is seldom free from the influences of the English language and culture and English words are frequently incorporated into Welsh speech, while some original English words become 'Welshified' through use. This phenomenon was certainly present in the spoken Welsh of the pupils who took part in the study, although there were variations in the amount of English present in their spoken Welsh. English words such as 'lot', 'because', 'so', 'stop', 'just', 'really' and 'cool' were commonly used by many pupils during their interviews and their frequent repetition suggested that this was how they normally spoke. When pupils used occasional English words or expressions, they still followed Welsh syntax patterns such as in the use of the bilingual term: '*llyfr* English' (English book) where the adjective follows the noun, contrasting with the adjective preceding the noun in English. At other times, pupils Welshified an English verb by including the suffix '*io*'. For instance, one pupil stated that his father encouraged him to do well at school (*mae 'nhad wedi 'encouragio' fi i wneud yn dda yn ysgol*) and many pupils used '*stopio*' in place of 'stop'. This is common practice in the everyday use of Welsh in speech. The translation of passages which included occasional English words was not problematic and Dr Jones did not suggest any amendments in this respect.

It is frequently found that idioms do not translate well from one language to another as they are often culturally and historically embedded. Evidence of this can be found in one translation (Appendix 4, Excerpt 6). A pupil had stated that she did not think that all pupils received the same support at home from their families as she received, adding that she thought that their respective families were not concerned about them. The following sentence in Welsh:

dy'n nhw'm yn poeni sut mae nhw'n gwneud (Welsh)

was translated as:

they don't worry about how they do

Dr Jones suggested that this should be amended to

they don't care about how they do

In the same excerpt, I had also translated the following Welsh phrase:

nad ydi pethau'n hawdd (Welsh)

as: things aren't that straightforward

whilst Dr Jones suggested that this should read as:

things aren't that simple.

Dr Jones confirmed that only a few minor amendments were necessary (see Appendix 4); these amendments were incorporated without changing the meanings of the excerpts included and analysed in the study. Following detailed analysis and discussion, it is believed that the remaining translations are equally valid whilst maintaining the original meaning and context throughout.

Part (i)

Issues relating to identity

The development of pupils' identities during secondary school years reflect the manifold influences that shape their personalities, values, ideas, relationships and understanding of their world (Jenkins, 1996). Exploring pupils' perceptions of these influences was a central feature of this study, which enabled an understanding of pupil identity, for whom they spoke and why they held particular views. Of particular interest to the study were the ways in which pupils had developed their learning identities within Ysgol Tremorfa and how those identities translated into their motivation to achieve academically. The 14 pupils who took part in the study each had their own unique identity. This identity was the culmination of their life experiences and relationships up to that point and, although many pupils shared similar experiences at school, the meanings they attributed to those experiences and their individual responses to

such experiences were diverse in nature. This provided the researcher with a rich source of data. Although each pupil shared many aspects of his/her own identity with the interviewer, the main focus of interest was to understand her/his specific learning identity and to gain an insight into how learning identities had developed.

However, learning identities cannot be considered in isolation from other aspects of an individual's identity and the aim of this study was to draw out those aspects of each pupil's identity which influenced the development of their learning identities within Ysgol Tremorfa. The adoption of a Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) approach ensured that I had a rigorous theoretical framework within which I could explore the subtleties of each pupil's specific identity.

Wenger (1998) demonstrates that learning identities may be understood by exploring the practices in which they develop and this is highly relevant in a school setting. By asking the pupils who took part in this study to describe the practices they had encountered and share the effects of their participation (or non-participation) in them, I hoped to gain an insight into how individuals develop as a function of being part of a particular community and how that community is influenced by its constituent members.

Belonging to a school community.

The issues of belonging to a community and being included in its practices are central to this study and were explored from the perspective of an individual's learning identity as well as taking into consideration a perspective of power. This section explores and discusses identity aspects of belonging to Ysgol Tremorfa, with particular reference to the concepts of power, of belongingness and of inclusion.

Of fundamental importance to the research was defining pupil understanding of the concepts of 'belonging' or 'not belonging' to the community of Ysgol Tremorfa. Attending school on a regular basis, wearing a particular school uniform, completing tasks in classrooms, associating with other pupils and teachers at school and taking part in various sports activities are in themselves insufficient to ensure that a pupil felt that he or she 'belonged', or otherwise, to Ysgol Tremorfa. All of these are activities or habits that an individual may undertake passively without feeling any emotional attachment to Ysgol Tremorfa. In some cases, a pupil who, for example, plays truant, does not always complete tasks assigned to them, refuses to comply with school uniform requirements or does not take part in sporting activities, may yet feel a sense of belonging to the school community despite external displays to the contrary. In exploring the central concept of belonging to a school community, direction was given to an endeavour to understand the diversity of pupils' views regarding those things they considered to be important components of belonging to the

community of Ysgol Tremorfa and how important their own sense of belonging was to them as individuals.

Friendship Groups.

For a majority of pupils, the most important aspect of belonging to the school community was the opportunity to develop friendships within that community. This became apparent at the outset of the study, reflecting Urdan & Maehr's (1995) view in respect of the powerful effects of young students' peer relationships within their learning process (see also Jackson, 2002; & Duffield *et al*, 2000). One of the first questions each pupil was asked was whether or not they enjoyed coming to school. Although this question was intended to help pupils initially settle down during the interview and to provide them with an opportunity to talk about themselves as suggested by Fontana & Frey (2005), the responses provided by pupils were also important in their own right as they provided a useful insight into the emotions that pupils felt regarding attending school. Most pupils stated that, in general, they enjoyed coming to school and they especially enjoyed spending time with their friends. Gareth's response typified this view:

DT How do you feel about coming to school?

Gareth I enjoy school a lot yeah, but it, like, depends which day it is. Like today, I don't like today because I've got a lot of difficult subjects – like subjects that I'm not really bothered about, like English and things, but there are some days with like Art, I really enjoy those days

DT What about seeing your friends at school?

Gareth Oh yes, **that's really important**, (*Gareth's emphasis*) I really enjoy
 seeing my friends, we have a laugh yeah.

Gareth displayed a positive attitude towards coming to school; however, spending time with his friends was generally more enjoyable than his schoolwork. Other pupils shared Gareth's enjoyment of spending time at school with their friends and this underlines the importance that pupils themselves attach to their social experiences at school, as was also seen in Day's (1996) study. For many pupils, friendships were established during early primary school years and the opportunity to make new friends at the beginning of their secondary school was an experience that most pupils had enjoyed, despite initial feelings of apprehension. Although many of the pupils enjoyed their schoolwork and interacting in formal learning situations, it appeared that informal social interaction between friends was a very important feature of their school day.

During their interviews, all the pupils displayed positive emotions when they talked about spending time with their friends at school and they often referred to good times when they had shared jokes and good '*craic*' with their '*mates*'. Pupils saw Ysgol Tremorfa as the location where they met a particular population of other pupils and it was the initial location where specific friendship groups had been established and evolved over time. School friends developed into close friends with the passage of time and this underlined the

importance of school as a social setting, where pupils spent a significant amount of their time. At school they navigated the complexities of developing strong, positive relationships with specific peers whilst not developing such social bonds with others. In general, pupils indicated that they felt relaxed and happy and encountered good experiences when they spent time within their own friendship group, where the members were felt to be trustworthy and were regarded as individuals with whom they strongly identified.

During interviews, pupils were keen to explain the manner in which they identified with particular friendship groups and this was also a means by which they could further define themselves to the researcher and reveal those values deemed important to themselves. Demonstrating Jenkins' (1996) characteristics of group membership, pupils stated that sharing common interests and values with group members was an essential and basic feature of friendship groups. All the pupils emphasised the central importance of being able to identify with their friends and the ability of their friends to identify with them. The informal social interactions within friendship groups involved discussions about the diverse issues that the pupils considered were of interest. For example, many pupils mentioned that they frequently discussed what they had seen on the television, music, family matters, magazines and books, sports, films, clothes and fashion accessories, hobbies, pets, shopping and other trips, and peers who were not part of their immediate friendship group. Although the pupils stated that they believed that many of these topics were inconsequential in themselves, they were found to be important as a vehicle to enable group members to

explore their specific individual and collective interests and to align themselves with certain views (Jenkins, 1996).

All pupils interviewed showed an awareness of feeling drawn towards other pupils who shared similar interests and values to their own. This process further affirmed their individual understanding of their own identity. Some pupils articulated the way in which their associations with particular friends reinforced their own sense of identity. For example, Richard shared the following:

...one of my friends comes here (*school*) and I'm glad I'm hanging out with him because he's very smart and he tries his best usually, so it's good to be around him.

Richard's view typifies the response of many pupils who took part in the research and underlines the fact that friendship groups tend to hold a similar attitude towards schoolwork, whilst also recognising that different members of the group showed varying degrees of effort and motivation towards their work within different subjects and at different times. It was also noted that many pupils realised that they and their friends supported each other in the learning process, ensuring that all members of that friendship group remained similarly motivated in achieving standards of work commensurate with their abilities. This appeared to be more common amongst girls in their groups. For example, Anna and Susan, in a joint interview with the researcher, discussed how being able to discuss things openly with their friends was important to them:

DT In what way is being able to discuss your schoolwork and how you feel about your work important do you think?

Susan It's really important because you've always got someone there who you can talk to, at the same age as you and going through the same things as you

Anna I work – I think, I work better with my friends because with most of the things I'm not sure about, Nan usually knows and the other way round too, so she helps me with maths and I help her with science

Susan Yeah, that's like me yeah, Nan motivates me, like I'm not very motivated when I come to school yeah, I'm kind of lazy. But I have friends who help me get there and will kick me up the bum if I forget something. So yeah, it's important to me that I've got friends that will help me to get to where I want to be.

Although Anna and Susan were keen to emphasise the supportive role that friends played in respect of their individual schoolwork, they realised that peers could also be competitive:

Anna Nan is competitive, but we don't compete against her, so it doesn't matter

Susan Yeah, she's really competitive, but we're not competitive ourselves. Really, we're quite like one big team, we all help each other.

Susan and Anna both recognised that being competitive was a means by which some pupils kept themselves motivated at school. However, it was also seen that they did not wish to enter into competition with any of their friends. Clearly, they saw collaboration between peers as being a positive factor in both motivating and helping themselves and their peers to achieve a successful academic outcome. Although admitting to the researcher that some girls were capable of being competitive in nature, they considered that boys tended to be much more competitive with each other in attaining academic goals:

Anna ... I see, like in maths, I see Harry and Marc always wanting to do better than each other and finish first... I think it's much better to work at your own pace

Susan Yeah, and other people feel left out if they can't compete, I think it's better if you just do your best, it doesn't matter about who finished first.

It became clear that many of the pupils interviewed felt that friends helped them understand who they were as individuals and also helped define that which was important to them. Alignment with a particular group enabled pupils to develop as individuals who felt comfortable in the company of fellow members of those groups, where they were able to develop and identify with the group's common interests, values and aspirations. Although the specific characteristics with which pupils aligned themselves were seen to vary from individual to individual, the sharing of a similar attitude towards schoolwork was held as being an important characteristic for most pupils. Pupils were seen to develop their own learning identities within the context of friendship groups and

frequently followed similar learning trajectories to other members of a particular group.

Reflecting Day's (1996) description of 'learning enhanced' (p. 55) friendship groups, there was clear evidence that the supportive roles of friends facilitated positive learning experiences and outcomes for group members. All pupils gave examples of when they had supported, or been supported by, their friends in their learning processes. There was clear evidence that this resulted in an improvement in their mastery of specific tasks as well as their perceived abilities to undertake further individual challenges, as explained by Lois:

I don't particularly enjoy English, but I know it's an important subject. I find it difficult to get my head round some of the poetry we study, I don't always see what everyone else does. It helps to discuss the meanings in a group in class, but I'm quite shy really and I don't like to say anything in front of the rest of the group. I find it easier to discuss my work with my friends and sometimes we'll go through some work after school. I don't mind so much saying that I don't understand something to my friends, they'll help me and I'll usually help them with maths or science, we all help each other and that gives me more confidence to try something by myself the next time. If I have difficulties the next time, I know that I can turn to my friends again, but it helps me to know how they try out their ideas.

Having explored pupils' views of how a group's collective learning identity and attitude towards schoolwork had developed, the researcher found the following commonly held responses and views amongst pupils when discussing this subject:

- individuals became friends with pupils whom they liked and who they believed reciprocated this feeling;
- individuals tended to befriend pupils who came from a similar background to their own (although this was not true in all cases);
- individuals befriended other pupils of a similar age to themselves, although several also had friends who were either one year older or younger than themselves. In general, they considered that their friends were as mature in their attitudes as they were themselves;
- individuals shared a common view of what was acceptable behaviour (both at school and elsewhere). All members of their friendship group behaved according to these shared standards;
- many pupils admitted that there was an element of competitiveness amongst members of their group. This was viewed as a positive feature that stimulated the group's collective motivation in respect of their work;

- individuals trusted their friends and believed that they could depend on them – both personally and for academic support;
- parents were supportive of pupils and their siblings and, in general, were keen for pupils to achieve similar or better qualifications than they themselves had achieved;
- parents approved of their friends and allowed them to come to their homes;
- there appeared to be a common view held amongst specific groups that hard work resulted in both academic and other (e.g. sports) successes.

Several pupils also explained why they did not associate with other pupils by not sharing particular friendship groups with them:

- individuals did not share the same interests;
- individuals were too rough/common and frequently got into trouble;
- individuals were snobs and looked down on other pupils;
- individuals did not care about their schoolwork and came to school because they had no other viable choice;

- individuals played truant and did not share their own behavioural standards;
- individuals were either boring or were swots;
- pupils' parents did not like specific individuals and would not like them to be friendly with them (e.g. one pupil said that her parents did not want her to 'mix with the wrong crowd');
- individuals had no aspirations and were generally termed 'losers';
- individuals expected to succeed without doing any work at school and might copy the work of other pupils;
- individuals did not go out in the evenings;
- individuals stayed out too late in the evenings;
- individuals did not trust some other pupils.

With the exception of Richard and Eleri (whose experiences are discussed on pages 113-120), there were clear 'voice' implications in what the pupils told the researcher about their friendship groups - that is, on behalf of whom the pupils were talking in these matters (Alcoff, 1991). When informing the researcher about their own friendship groups, they discussed themselves and their own

experiences and values, using anecdotes to support their views. However, when discussing other groups, particularly ones with whom they did not personally identify, they shared their impressions of the values of the other groups. Because of this, it can be argued that some of the impressions shared were either unfounded or subjective in nature. Other pupils made value judgements regarding the peers' actions based on facts (e.g. some pupils got into trouble with the police) whilst at other times judgements were based on their own individual perceptions and values (e.g. some pupils were snobs who looked down on others). Notwithstanding this, their views, whether objective or subjective in nature, revealed a great deal about the character of the pupils themselves. They were able to share with the researcher the way in which they saw themselves and the values that they professed to share with their friends. This, in turn, gave an insight into the complex contexts of their learning identities.

Although most of the interviewees who shared their reasons for not being part of friendship groups, other than their own, were mainly high-achieving and highly motivated pupils, five of the pupils were mid to low academic achievers. Their views on motivation and learning reflected the extent to which those individuals had engaged with their learning processes at school, as well as reflecting their own particular standards of behaviour. There was a consensual view, based upon the pupils' observations of their own friendship groups, that motivated learners tended to display the following characteristics :

- they saw a strong relationship between effort and academic (and other) success. Individuals gave examples of having worked hard and having achieved good results; several also gave examples of not having worked sufficiently hard and knowing they had failed to reach the standard they were capable of. They believed that they had to work hard at all times if they were to succeed;
- they took responsibility for their own learning and sought assistance, either at home or at school, when they found aspects of their work difficult;
- they felt that they were in control of their learning and were satisfied that they had been placed in sets that provided them with sufficient challenges;
- they collaborated within their friendship groups to support each other;
- they tended to be confident learners who expected to succeed academically within their understood abilities and limits;
- they had clear ambitions and had planned their learning trajectories (including choice of subjects for A-Levels) to meet those aspirations. Their ambitions were realistic and commensurate with their past academic achievements;

- they frequently wanted to pursue a career, following completion of their education, that was both fulfilling and well paid;
- they wished to make their parents proud of them as individuals and of their achievements and some considered that academic success was a means by which they could repay their parents for their support.

In general, pupils who considered themselves to be motivated learners tended to be confident individuals who pursued their tasks in the expectation that they would succeed. They had a high sense of self-efficacy (Seifert, 2004) that was firmly rooted in successful past learning experiences and they recognised the importance of putting effort into their tasks. Several pupils stated that succeeding in a task, without employing a great deal of effort, would minimise their sense of achievement upon its completion. They considered that individuals who did this, cheated themselves more than anyone else. These pupils saw themselves as individuals who were popular amongst their friendship groups, where they felt valued and able to contribute positively to their group's activities and values. Their positive sense of self-worth was confirmed iteratively and continuously, both by active group membership and by their academic achievements, and highlights the importance of the individual's understanding of their own self-worth as a motivating factor (Seifert, 2004; Covington, 1984). Individuals also saw themselves as active participants in the school's learning and social community, where they both defined and identified themselves in accordance with the activities in which they partook (Wenger, 1998).

There were also manifestations of competitiveness within motivated learners which did not translate to the pupils' pursuance of performance goals (Seifert, 1997; Dweck & Leggett, 1988); competitiveness was seen as a means of driving all group members to achieve the best possible outcomes within their capacity. Competitiveness was also a means by which some friendship group members took a leading role and supported other members – either practically, by helping them with their work, or by providing emotional support when they struggled with their work. These pupils were clearly driven in the pursuit of well-defined mastery goals. In some circumstances, the entire group would pursue these goals, such as when they were studying towards a particular examination or test - they would test each other's knowledge and contribute towards each other's knowledge and understanding. At other times, individual pupils would pursue different goals that were specific to their own needs. These were not necessarily linked to different subject options but reflected an individual pupil's perceived need to improve a particular skill, suggestive of Seifert's (1997) self-regulative and self-determining learning styles. These pupils felt empowered when pursuing their individual learning needs and were sufficiently in control of their learning trajectories to ensure successful learning outcomes.

During interviews, pupils stated their awareness of significant differences between motivated and unmotivated learners. Pupils such as Eric and Colin, and particularly Flame, had experienced sustained periods of antipathy and disaffection towards their schoolwork and were able to describe in detail how they felt about their achievements during those times. Other pupils based their

statements on their observations of pupils whom they considered to be unmotivated and who underachieved. These are the traits that interviewees considered characteristic of unmotivated learners :

- they tended to believe that ability was a key determinant of academic success, although they considered that effort was also important. They felt that there was little point in working hard if they did not believe that they had any ability in specific subjects;
- they demonstrated a reluctance to take responsibility for their own underperformance, giving reasons such as ‘the teacher did not explain properly’, or ‘the class was too noisy’, or ‘there are too many children in the class’ or ‘my mother was bad at maths too so I’m just like her’;
- they tended to give up easily when work was difficult and did not seek additional assistance from their teachers;
- they gave the impression that they were not concerned about learning;
- they tended not to discuss their schoolwork a great deal within a friendship group as they considered that other matters (e.g. sports, boyfriends, going out in the evenings) were more important;
- they were frequently ambitious, but their aspirations were not always realistic and did not reflect their past academic achievements. For

instance, one pupil who was in the lower sets in many subjects wanted to become a teacher, whilst another wanted to become a professional footballer;

- they sometimes believed that they were placed in lower sets than they should be but were reluctant to work harder in an attempt to move to a higher set (e.g. 'what's the point of working harder, I'll never catch up with the work they've done in set 3');
- they often believed that they would be capable of improving their effort and achievements in future for specific goals (e.g. 'I'll work harder for my GCSEs than I did for my mocks');
- they often felt that they were not treated fairly (e.g. one pupil complained that her friend had a higher mark than she for a task they had completed together) and found this to be very demotivating;
- they wanted to pursue careers that paid well and did not always believe that qualifications were necessary to achieve this, giving examples of family members who had successful careers, for example, in building and mechanical trades;

(Although all interviewees did not highlight these characteristics, they were explored by the researcher, with each pupil, in subsequent interviews in order to reach a consensual view regarding unmotivated learners. These views relate to

the pupils interviewed and are not necessarily representative of all pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa). It was interesting to note, during the interviews, that all pupils recognised that they themselves had exhibited some traits from both sets of characteristics at different times, although they identified more closely with one set of characteristics than with the other. This highlights the fluid nature of the motivation to learn within each individual, where specific learning trajectories are a culmination of factors over which individuals deem to have control, as well as other factors over which they have little or no control (Wenger, 1998). Pupils demonstrated that an individual's capacity to participate in the learning process is frequently determined by factors such as the influence of their family, experiences outside school and the practices within school. These factors either enable or hinder them in the development of their specific learning identities. Furthermore, by defining that which is important to their friends, pupils also articulate that which is of importance to themselves and their reasons for belonging to particular friendship groups.

Pupils who were not motivated learners displayed less positive general attitudes towards their learning experiences, although this was not a feature in all cases within the research. Some pupils showed anxiety about their abilities and lacked confidence when they undertook their educational tasks, often finding tasks too difficult to complete unaided and being unable or unwilling to employ different strategies when faced with problems. Although pupils stated that they were quite happy to seek some assistance from teachers or peers, there appeared to be a reluctance to seek help frequently, especially in the presence of friends, as pupils 'didn't want to look thick' in front of their peers. Some pupils shared

that if, after receiving help from teachers with their studies, they were still unable to complete their tasks, they felt dispirited and too embarrassed to seek further guidance. Pupils also admitted that, in such circumstances, individuals would often withdraw effort or misbehave in order to deflect attention from their inability to complete their work.

Pupils who admitted to not being highly motivated learners displayed a degree of antipathy towards their work and felt a lack of ownership of their own learning process. These attitudes could frequently be traced to earlier events and experiences where they believed themselves to be unsuccessful learners. In some cases, pupils recalled how a careless remark made by a peer or teacher was seen as undermining and engendered negative emotions with respect to learning activities. Others felt low self-esteem that appeared to be further confirmed when encountering difficulties in their learning tasks.

A common view held by unmotivated learners was that the achievement of successful learning outcomes often involved 'getting the right answer', rather than understanding the route taken to achieve the correct answer. Pupils were not seen to differentiate between success in simple or harder tasks. Being seen to achieve the correct answer was important to an individual, whilst the following of prescribed learning strategies was often considered to be unnecessary and tedious. Signifying the characteristics of individuals who pursue performance (or social comparison) goals (Meece et al, 1988) combined with defensive self-worth protective strategies (Seifert, 2004), these pupils did not generally consider themselves to be motivated learners and they were often

frustrated when they were not able to display learning successes to their peers. However, they appeared to be less concerned about displaying their shortcomings to their teachers.

In general, unmotivated learners were seen to feel they had little control over their own learning process and were unable to explore alternative learning routes of their own volition, or under their teacher's guidance, frequently attributing their failures to external, persistent factors that were beyond their control. This corresponds to Weiner's (1984, 1985) argument that the causes to which learners attribute their learning successes or failures are significant determinants of the emotions that they experience and these emotions, in turn, influence the learners' expectations of success or failure in future learning activities. Pupils may adapt their behaviour in order to draw attention away from their perceived deficiencies by becoming self-worth protective and withdrawing effort or misbehaving in lessons (Seifert, 2004; Thompson & Perry 2005). Clear evidence was present, within the cohort of pupils in this study, that this was the case and, although most of the pupils did not openly admit to engaging in such attitudes and behaviours, they clearly recognised that such behaviours took place in lessons and expressed an understanding of the reasons for these attitudes and patterns of behaviour.

Self-worth protection theories of motivation appeared to describe the attitudes and behaviours of most pupils, irrespective of their degree of motivation. Underpinning these attitudes were the means by which pupils attributed their successes or failures and the types of learning goals that they pursued. Pupils

who felt that their self-worth was enhanced by their efforts and eventual learning successes tended to be highly motivated. However, pupils who felt that their self-worth was undermined in learning settings tended to be unmotivated and pursued strategies that protected their sense of self-worth.

Changing allegiance – changing learning identity?

It is important, at this point, to recognise that membership of friendship groups is a phenomenon that is fluid in nature (Jenkins, 1996) and children may navigate several friendship groups during their school careers. Newcomers to a specific group will be seen to be peripheral participants during the early stages of their membership. They observe the group's activities and common values before either increasing their degree of participation or withdrawing from the group (Wenger, 1998). Many pupils were seen to gravitate towards similar types of friendship groups while retaining membership of several concurrent groups. During their academic careers, some described their experience of membership of friendship groups with very different outlooks, while others shared accounts of changing from one type of group to another which was very different in nature. These cases provide a powerful insight into how individuals perceive their own personal identities and, in so doing, make important decisions that affect the development of their learning identities.

During interview, Richard was eager to demonstrate his high motivation and his keenness to pursue studies at university. As one of his teachers, I witnessed his consistent effort and achievement in lessons. However, in the past, Richard had

not always been as focused on his work as he was at the time of this research. During interview, he recalled how, during his first three years at secondary school, he and his friends did not take their schoolwork seriously, with lessons being frequently considered as places where group members relished 'acting the fool and doing as little work as possible'. Lessons were often seen as locations for confrontation between some members of his friendship group (including himself) and their teachers. Within the context of the classroom, the teaching staff saw them as pupils who had few misgivings about wasting their own time or that of their fellow pupils. Although the group had not explicitly discussed their views about their schoolwork with each other, at that time, they frequently displayed a collective lack of engagement with the learning process and showed a preference for what teachers saw as an attitude of misbehaviour in class:

DT How do you think pupils start to misbehave in class?

Richard I don't know, I don't think we sat down and said 'I'm going to do this in class and I'm going to be bad' and stuff, sometimes we might be in a lesson and someone might say 'let's do this' but I don't think we ever sat down and planned anything, it just came naturally I guess, acting silly and stuff. And, once one acts silly, then you act silly and then they'll try and act even more silly so that they get more attention and then you try and act up even more so that you get attention. It has to do with getting attention more than anything I think, so they misbehave to get attention.

Membership of this particular friendship group was seen to be further galvanised by the competitive behaviour of the male membership by the practices they developed as they endeavoured to outperform each other through misbehaviour and withdrawing effort from academic work. They were seen not to take schoolwork seriously and such academic withdrawal and misbehaviour were considered by members of the group as 'cool'. However, during his third year at school, Richard came to realise that the continuation, as an active member of this particular group, would be personally detrimental. He realised that what seemed to be harmless fun in the short term, might become academically damaging for him in the long term. Richard recalled an incident from that period in which a teacher blamed him for the actions of one of his friends in the classroom. During the ensuing disciplinary process, the individual from his friendship group watched him being punished without intervening in any way. Richard became acutely aware that his friends were not as reliable as he had previously believed them to be and felt annoyed and disappointed with their behaviour. Richard saw this as a very disconcerting experience that led him to assess his personal behaviour in the context of the classroom. He shared with the interviewer his belief that, deep down, he was aware at the time that he was becoming uncomfortable with his development as a young individual.

Having withdrawn from that particular friendship group, Richard was able to gain a more objective view of the behaviour of himself and his friends. As a result of this process of self-analysis, he realised that, as a group, he and his friends were all low achievers owing to their attitudes towards schoolwork.

Richard came to see that he was underachieving more than most of his friends within the group but considered that, if he kept out of trouble, he had the ability to 'make something of myself'. At that point, he was seen to question how strongly he had identified with that particular friendship group, suggesting his group membership had been more marginal than he had realised at the time. Richard felt drawn towards another friendship group which maintained a very different, and more positive, attitude towards schoolwork and through its membership has been seen to increase his engagement in his own learning process. This process has continued since he became a member.

Other pupils, apart from Richard, also shared their reasons for changed attitudes towards schoolwork by inclusion within specific friendship groups. Eleri had also been part of a friendship group whose members were defined as low achievers. She was seen to spend most of her free time with her friends, frequently staying out late, arguing with her family and 'just being difficult'. Although working fairly consistently at school, Eleri felt that she was trying to strike a balance between different behaviours and identities in order to please her friends and was finding this task difficult. As her friends grew older, they were seen increasingly to flirt with trouble, which caused Eleri much consternation. Her family were deeply worried about her attitude and academic progress and disapproved of her friends. She increasingly felt 'caught in the middle' and describes the anxiety felt at the time:

I knew what I should be doing but I also liked being with my friends, but as they got into more and more trouble, I realised that I didn't belong

with them. They thought I was a goody-goody because I didn't get into fights or go shoplifting with them, but I just felt that I couldn't do that, I couldn't do that to my family, I couldn't let them down like that. In the end, I just had to leave them and move on.

However, Eleri found the process of 'moving on' to be very difficult as her 'friends' quickly became her tormentors and she was systematically bullied by them thereafter.

Realising that her individual identity was not compatible with the collective values of her friendship group, the tensions that she felt when her friends were behaving in a manner that was alien to her own values forced her to confront her own identity. She recognised that being true to her own identity, whilst upholding her own and her family's values, was more important to her than the friendship of group members. Although the decision she made to part with the group and move on was a difficult one, Eleri stated that she knew in her heart that it was the right decision for her.

Eleri and Richard's cases imply that, when individuals realise that their own values are not compatible with their friends', they have difficult choices to make between two sets of values. In both of the cases highlighted in the research, the individuals decided to distance themselves from those groups. This suggests that some individuals may have the ability to recognise that a hierarchy of influences contributes to the development of their personal identities and values and realise that, in certain group situations, dominant influences can become jeopardised causing them to re-evaluate their priorities.

Richard and Eleri's responses suggest that the process of choosing to abandon certain relationships in favour of others may prove to be an empowering experience for the individual concerned, where that empowerment is closely aligned to the individual's sense of self-efficacy and personal motivation (Bandura, 1993). Both pupils recognised that their participation in learning had been obstructed by membership of particular friendship groups (Day, 1996) and acknowledged that their motivation to work had changed as a direct consequence of changing friendship groups. The feedback they received from their teachers regarding their academic efforts confirmed this. In Dörnyei's (2000) terms, both Eleri and Richard's change of motivation can be seen as a re-evaluation of their 'wishes and desires' (p. 524) following a change in friendship group alignments. Both pupils also recognised that their families were very supportive of them during some emotionally difficult periods as they constructed and negotiated new identities for themselves as part of new friendship groupings and practices. However, significant identity shifts take time to develop and the individuals concerned may face difficulties in detaching themselves completely from their previous activities, perhaps leading to a significant undermining of confidence.

In Eleri's case, she was certain that she would benefit by distancing herself from her old friends and she channelled her energies into improving her achievements at school. She was determined not to become a 'loser' as she saw her old friends had become; her fear of failure in her forthcoming GCSE examinations was clearly tangible to her and she had analysed the possible consequences of such failure on her academic progress at Ysgol Tremorfa. It

was, however, unclear whether she was working diligently from personal motivation or because she feared failure itself. This question was further explored in her final interview:

DT Why do you think you're working so hard for your GCSEs?

Eleri I want to do well, I really want to pass and go on to sixth form, I feel that I could leave the whole bullying experience behind and move on, but I'm afraid that if I don't do well, I'll just become depressed again like I was before and my hair will start falling out again. If I fail, I know that the ones who bullied me will just laugh and call me names. I don't know if I could go through that again.

DT It sounds as if you fear failing your exams, which do you think is the more important to you, the need to pass your GCSEs or fear of failure?

Eleri Umm... I suppose that both of them are important, I want to pass because I've always looked forward to going on to University but I also think that fearing failure and all that goes with that is very important too

DT If you had to choose just one, which one would it be?

Eleri *(pause)*... I think it would be fear of failure because of what it might do to me, I think that everything I've been through with the bullying and those girls has made me look at things differently. I don't trust many people now and I don't want people to laugh at me.

Eleri's experiences highlight two aspects pupils might see as relevant to their own motivational processes - that an individual might be seen to be either motivated to succeed academically on the one hand, or motivated not to fail academically on the other hand. Although, as in Eleri's case, both aspects of motivation were seen to be closely related, the impetus behind each differed considerably. However, it can be seen that both aspects result in similar outcomes of enhanced effort (Dörnyei, 2000). Eleri's experiences suggest that working hard because of a fear of failure was an approach she had learned at a relatively late age, whereas many of the pupils interviewed in this study shared that they had maintained a similar attitude towards effort and academic achievement from an earlier age.

Feelings of exclusion.

When interviewed, pupils, in general, stated that they enjoyed coming to school because they were able to spend time with their friends. However, one pupil, Flame, did not share this reasoning; she was both emphatic and emotional regarding her hatred of school attendance:

Oh, I hate it, **really hate it** (*Flame's emphasis*) it's just the whole getting up in the morning, I want to stay in bed and... you just have to do it at the end of the day... I've never liked this school, I hate it, it's horrible, I don't like it at all...

During interview, it became clear that Flame faced many personal difficulties - not being able to integrate well at Ysgol Tremorfa and feeling that the problems she encountered overshadowed any positive experiences she had at school. All effort invested in schoolwork was seen as futile when compared with the problems she faced at the time. In an effort to understand whether such a negative attitude towards the learning process had always been held, I asked about her schooling experiences before she came to Ysgol Tremorfa. She replied emotionally:

I loved primary school ... **that was the best place in the world to me** (*Flame's emphasis*) that was the only place where I ever, in my whole life now – up to now, felt safe and wanted.

Flame further expanded on her memories regarding primary school as a time when she felt happy and secure. She was plainly proud of her achievements and the friendships made during those early years:

Oh, I was a top student, I was top of the class, they used to call me 'teacher's pet' ... I was really motivated then... my friends motivated me, we used to have a laugh with the teachers... things like that made me know that I was around people that I loved.

Citing examples of particularly enjoyable experiences during her primary school years, such as school trips and celebrating birthdays, Flame explained that she had found the positive relationships forged with peers and teachers as very important contributions to her development both as a child and as a pupil. Clearly, she still desired to be a part of a similar community at Secondary

School. When interviewed she showed a deep personal sadness and regret that she was unlikely to experience again the same kind of trust and joy experienced during those early formative years. In Flame's experience, the sense of belonging and feeling of being valued at her school were closely related to feelings of happiness and her perceptions of academic success and motivation at that time. Although she enjoyed spending time with friends at Ysgol Tremorfa, she often felt alienated from the school community and unable to achieve academic standards commensurate with her perceived ability. A palpable sadness emerged in her responses when discussing this topic during interview. In Flame's personal experience, school was something to be tolerated until she was 16 years of age and not an experience to be enjoyed for its own sake.

During another interview, Colin shared the fact that, although he was happy to come to school at that time and to spend time with his friends, some personal experiences at primary school had undermined his sense of belonging to a school community. He had been badly bullied at primary school and, when he had told his teachers, his perception was that they did not believe him. He ultimately felt that the individuals responsible had not been dealt with properly by those in authority. The process of endeavouring to cope emotionally with being bullied by his peers on the one hand and not being believed by his teachers on the other hand, had been a very negative experience for Colin. He explained how he had felt about this:

When they didn't believe me, I felt that they liked my bullies more than me, they didn't think they had done anything wrong, but they thought I

was a troublemaker and I wasn't, I really wasn't. I didn't feel that I counted after that, so I didn't try much afterwards.

Speaking with the benefit of hindsight, Colin was critical of how easily he had become marginalised by the situation at a relatively young age. He continued to feel marginalised until he moved on to Ysgol Tremorfa and for several more years after he changed school. At that time, Colin placed the responsibility for ensuring that pupils felt included in the school's community squarely at the door of his teachers, not accepting that he himself should have changed his own actions in order to secure inclusion.

The experiences of both Flame and Colin demonstrate that a pupil's understanding of the process of belonging and inclusion within a school community is a complex one and dependent upon the emotions experienced at that particular time. When asked to explain what was meant by 'not belonging' to his primary school's community, Colin explained that he felt 'like an outsider' and was frequently picked upon by his teachers. He felt that he was blamed for things he had not done, that he did not always receive help from teachers and that his teachers were impatient with him and lacked interest in him as an individual. He also believed that his peers seemed to be treated in a more favourable manner by the same teachers and received more help from them with their work. He recalls that teachers often joked with his peers and showed interest in what they had to say and their actions. Looking back, Colin said that he found these experiences hurtful and seemed still to be bitter about

that period in his educational career. They seemed to have had a lasting effect on his current academic progress and his personal attitude towards schoolwork.

The majority of the pupils included in this research shared a strong sense of belonging and inclusion at Ysgol Tremorfa, which was reflected in their sense of well-being at school, a strong sense of purpose regarding their schooling, positive feelings with respect to their relationships with peers and friends at school, positive feelings of anticipation and expectation regarding their futures and a presumption that they would receive the necessary support from the school in order to achieve their personal goals and aspirations. The importance of belonging is emphasised by Wenger (1998) :

being included in what matters is a requirement for being engaged in a
community's practice, just as engagement is what defines belonging
(p. 74).

Clearly, the feeling of inclusion is a necessary precondition for an individual to engage in a community's practices and this was evident in the experiences of the pupils studied. Collaboration between peers within the school community was generally considered by participants to be a pleasurable and beneficial experience. Many pupils also stated that, when they supported other pupils and took an active part in learning interactions, they felt that they were making a valued contribution to the school's practices and benefitting personally from such active participation. This can be seen as an empowering experience for many pupils, where such experiences both shape, and are shaped by, the

communities in which they participate. Wenger (1998) highlights the importance of such 'transformative potential' (p. 56) in enabling individuals to participate in communities and in shaping the practices of those communities.

However, in the cases of Flame and Colin, their experiences demonstrate the fragility of belonging to a school community and the relative ease with which membership, and social and learning participation, can become problematic. Although both pupils had good relationships with their friends, it was clear that this, in itself, was not sufficient to enable them to feel that they fully belonged to the school community. Furthermore, the perception that, as individuals, they did not belong to, or fit within a school community, had a powerful effect on the way they saw themselves as learners. They both talked about the futility of becoming over-involved in educational tasks or objectives when they did not believe that they would succeed in those tasks nor would they impress their teachers. Both had learned to avoid being detected by their teachers for lack of effort in their work by going through the motions of engagement. In reality, neither really cared about how well they completed the work at school.

These cases suggest the strong relationship between a pupil's personal emotions and their motivation and effort with respect to schoolwork. Both pupils had been high achievers (confirmed by SATS grades) at various stages of their respective educational careers and were both aware that they were or had been academically underachieving. Both were able to identify the causes of their own negative and painful emotions, yet felt unable to detach themselves from those emotions in order to concentrate on their schoolwork. Weiner (1984,

1985) highlights the importance of learners' emotional states in determining their motivation to achieve, the negative emotions felt by Colin and Flame were clearly detrimental to their motivation and effort. These were exacerbated by the factors which they perceived as causing their problems. In both cases, they felt that they had little control over their difficulties and became resigned to academic failure. By developing personal strategies in order to avoid being detected by teachers for withdrawing effort leading to probable failure, both pupils ensured that notions of self-worth had been largely protected (Seifert, 2004). It appears that protecting perceptions of self-worth was both easier and of more importance to both pupils than exploring different strategies that might result in more success, thus making themselves more vulnerable in the eyes of their peers or teachers.

Equal opportunities for all?

During interviews, and in his written introduction, Hywel was keen to emphasise the importance he placed on being friends with pupils from different backgrounds. These ranged from pupils from economically underprivileged households to pupils with more privileged upbringings. He argued, with conviction, the importance of securing value and status for pupils based upon their identities and worth as individuals rather than their familial or economic backgrounds. He also believed that pupils from different backgrounds were able to enrich each other's lives by sharing their diverse experiences with each other. Hywel was not of the opinion that everyone shared his views regarding diversity and he was critical of the superficial judgements made by some teachers and

pupils in this regard. He considered that some pupils, particularly those from economically underprivileged households, were not always treated with respect by peers and teachers, believing they were being undermined as individuals through the attitudes and practices of some members of Ysgol Tremorfa's community.

Hywel held the view that some practices at Ysgol Tremorfa benefited pupils who came from comfortable, middle-class families to the detriment of pupils who did not share such economic privileges. He asserted his belief that some teachers and pupils held elitist attitudes and appropriated a higher value, at school, to academic success than to vocational success. In his opinion, certain teachers and peers held vocational achievements to be suitable only for pupils not sufficiently intelligent to pursue academic qualifications. Hywel explained that he rejected this view of educational attainment and this was evident in his written introduction, where he provides a specific example of such attitudes amongst some of his friends:

I never knew that prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes were so prevalent amongst pupils at my school. I knew about the teachers already, but I didn't realise what the attitudes of pupils were until I went to the sixth form and the majority of my friends left school to go on apprenticeships, joined the army, started working or went to study at a college of further education.

A specific example of the attitudes I highlighted was when two of my friends were over in my house having a beer, watching a game. My

friend who was in the sixth form and had hopes of going to university, after light back-and-forth banter, said to my other friend David, 'at least I have A-Levels' to which my other friend, who is an apprentice carpet layer, and who was recently given his own van and allowed to complete jobs on his own without supervision, over two years prematurely in recognition of his skill and dedication, responded 'I don't want A-Levels mate'. I was more irritated than David and said 'David doesn't know how many electrons there are in the outer shell of Lithium, but he doesn't need to know that, do you know at what temperature candine and vinyl be laid down anymore? No, but David does 'cause that's what he needs to know'.

During his years at Ysgol Tremorfa, Hywel witnessed changes in the attitudes of some of his friends, towards each other, as a consequence of the teaching groups in which they had been placed at school. He also believed the nature of the education that pupils received was a direct consequence of the practices and values held by Ysgol Tremorfa as an educational institution. In his opinion, some pupils were able to develop their learning identities confidently at school because their wider identities (including background and aptitude) conformed with the dominant values of the school as an institution (as presented by certain teachers and pupils). Other pupils, who did not share these values in the same way, were unable to develop academically to the same extent as their educational needs were not always well accommodated by the school. Furthermore, Hywel considered that pupils' attitudes towards each other had a significant bearing upon how each individual perceived themselves as learners and shaped individual motivation.

Other pupils who voiced their concerns regarding the way pupils sometimes responded when they were placed into sets for specific subjects, also echoed this view. The majority of pupils interviewed believed that being taught in sets that contained pupils of similar abilities benefited learners within them, enabling them to make academic progress at a pace that suited the individuals concerned. However, several shared their belief that some pupils responded to being placed in good sets by being insensitive and, at times, unpleasant towards some of their peers. Examples being:

Tony's become bigheaded since he's been put in the top sets, he was alright before, but he thinks he's better than me now

and

I don't think they have a problem with setting, but I do think they have a problem with what setting does to people. And they resent it – not the fact that other pupils are more able than them, but the fact that they look down on them and think that they're better than them

There seemed genuine concern amongst pupils in the study that such attitudes undermine the efforts and achievements of pupils in lower sets, making them feel inferior to other pupils within the school. Furthermore, several pupils suggested that pupils who had been undermined by their peers might intentionally and publicly withdraw their efforts rather than be seen as having difficulties with their academic schoolwork.

These examples highlight some of the problems inherent in school policies and practices, where children are placed into sets that reflect their learning abilities in order to maximise the potential learning outcomes. The use, by both teachers and pupils, of terms such as ‘top set’ and ‘bottom set’, in order to describe a specific teaching group and the complexity of work that is assigned to that group, can potentially imply that some pupils are more successful or ‘clever’ than their counterparts in other teaching groups. Whilst not wishing to discuss in great detail the merits and weaknesses of placing pupils into sets for teaching, I recognise that schools such as Ysgol Tremorfa adopt a utilitarian approach, where the learning needs of the majority are addressed in broad terms, potentially at the expense of a minority of pupils who do not benefit from such groupings. Reflecting Wenger’s (1998) ‘trade-offs of institutionalization’ (p. 242), where policies and procedures are designed to facilitate the institution’s broad aims, it becomes clear that a failure to appreciate the social dimension of learning, and thus its effect on the development of an individual’s learning identity, may result in the marginalisation of some members of that particular learning community. What was apparent, from the examples provided, was that Ysgol Tremorfa’s practices were instrumental in enabling some community members to marginalise other community members, whilst at the same time reaffirming their own membership by considering themselves to be beneficiaries of the school’s practices.

Ysgol Tremorfa, like all schools, has adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy which declares the school’s commitment to providing equal opportunities for all

members of its community. Such policies make broad statements of intention but seldom, in practice, provide for the subtleties and nuances present within social interactions between individuals from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds with different life experiences. It can be argued, because one group of individuals within the community is seen to marginalise another group's participation within that same community's activities, that certain of the school's practices may be flawed. It can be further argued that the shared repertoire that is necessary for a CoP to function properly is not equally accessible to all (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, it may be the case that the school's practices favour the empowerment of some groups of pupils at the expense of others (Foucault, 1980). It is not known how many pupils have been affected by the perceived elitist attitudes of some of their peers but some of the pupils interviewed certainly perceived that this was important to them as individuals within the community.

Individuals who have faced such marginalisation often feel their self-worth has been undermined by their peers and experience negative emotions in relation to their learning identities. By comparing themselves less favourably to peers who receive public recognition for their efforts, pupils may find their sense of self-efficacy and self-worth significantly undermined (Seifert, 2004). This would certainly have a detrimental effect on their motivation and effort, particularly if they were to adopt self-worth protective strategies in order to persuade their peers that they were not really concerned about personal academic success or failure.

A pupil's language and learning.

All lessons in Ysgol Tremorfa are conducted either through the medium of Welsh or bilingually (Welsh/English) and the school, as an institution, both reflects and reinforces the linguistic context within which the school functions. Most of the pupils who attend the school are fluent Welsh speakers and their educational careers are conducted almost entirely through the medium of the Welsh language. Externally, many pupils are active participants in numerous aspects of Welsh language and culture, ranging from Eisteddfodau to music and drama productions, and many participate in sports activities conducted through the medium of Welsh. Additionally, pupils enjoy listening to Welsh language pop music, read Welsh language books and magazines and watch Welsh language television programmes. The majority of the pupils within the study stated that they were participants in various aspects of several of the above Welsh activities, although they also took part in similar activities conducted through the English language. Many pupils were obviously confident and proud of their Welsh identity and saw it as more than merely being able to speak Welsh. Several pupils noted in their interviews that being able to communicate in Welsh as well as English was an essential skill for obtaining work in many sectors and felt that Ysgol Tremorfa prepared them well for this.

Despite the fact that all Welsh speaking pupils, from households where Welsh was the spoken language, were aware of, and self-assured in their Welsh identity, there emerged clear socio-economic differences in how this identity was interpreted. Pupils who came from more-affluent households recognised

the importance of a broader cultural dimension to their Welsh identity. They were more likely to have taken part in 'Eisteddfodau' (at school and further afield) or attended music or drama festivals (e.g. several pupils stated that they enjoyed going to 'Sesiwn Fawr, Dolgellau'). In addition to this, they were more likely to read Welsh language literature, watch Welsh language television programmes and listen to Welsh language music.

However, pupils from less-affluent households were seen to be less likely to have shared in such activities, and several individuals stated that they watched certain Welsh language television programmes (e.g. '*Sgorio*' and '*Porc Peis Bach*' - Welsh sports and comedy programmes). In general terms, understanding of Welsh identity focused on the notion of being born in Wales and speaking Welsh. Living their lives through the medium of the Welsh language was considered to be a basic right and any perceived challenge to this right was a challenge to their own individual identity as human beings.

Different interpretations of Welsh identity were seen to be the means by which pupils perceived themselves both as individuals and as members of a particular group. Pupils readily conceded that it was their parents who had been influential in how they saw themselves as young Welsh people, just as their parents had instilled other values into them. For many pupils, living their lives at school through the medium of the Welsh language was another facet of belonging to the school community and the use of Welsh as an educational medium was a completely natural process.

Some pupils, however, saw the Welsh character of the school as a means by which they were excluded from many of its common social and educational activities. Three of the pupils who took part in the study had moved into the area during, or following, their primary school years and, although some had managed to learn Welsh to a good standard, they did not generally identify fully with the school's Welsh character and ethos. Pupils who had not learnt Welsh found the experience of attending Ysgol Tremorfa an alienating experience, which had a significant effect on their motivation to learn. It was seen that some pupils were clearly resentful of this.

For example, Eric had moved to Wales from a large city in England following the death of his father towards the end of his primary school years. He had established good friendships with both English and Welsh young people and did not feel that their linguistic differences were an issue outside lessons. In general, he displayed a positive attitude towards Welsh speakers, although he was not fluent in the language himself. However, he frequently had problems following the content of lessons conducted mainly through the medium of Welsh. This was particularly apparent when Welsh was being spoken quickly by his teachers:

... sometimes I get a bit cranky, like when I have to sit in some lessons and just be like ... like that yeah (*gesturing 'I don't know what they're doing'*) because they're doing it in Welsh yeah. I've got nothing against it yeah but I'd like to have it at least written down in English not in Welsh for me yeah.

Although some of his friends assisted him with his work, by translating what the teacher had said into English, he did not feel that he was receiving the same direct attention from the teacher as did Welsh speaking pupils. Despite this perception, he also realised that teachers faced some technical problems with presenting every lesson bilingually:

the teacher has to choose the best option, help him or help them, and there's more of them than of me yeah, and then they think that I'm bad because I'm talking all the time and stuff.

Eric explained that some of his teachers were able to discuss the class work in English with him individually after they had set work, in Welsh, for the rest of the class. He found this a positive experience where his own needs – linguistic and academic - were usually addressed to a satisfactory level. However, this was not always the case and he frequently felt that he was missing out in lessons, describing the situation in negative terms.

Flame was another pupil who had moved to Wales as a teenager from a large city in England following the break-up of her parents' marriage. She had a limited knowledge of Welsh and found Welsh medium lessons very frustrating and was clearly bitter about her lack of progress at school because of this:

I don't like the lessons, there's some teachers, they speak Welsh and don't speak good English... I don't know how I'm going to pass my subjects... I'm not being funny, but I feel kind of angry because it's like they're taking away my future if you get what I mean. It's like – I

understand bits of Welsh, but that's when people talk slowly, so if they go on and on in Welsh, it's kind of hard, it makes me switch off... I don't think you can feel at home or welcome or anything, it kind of makes you feel that you're not wanted there - if you get what I mean, like they're not bothered about us, and then I sometimes feel like if I skipped all of my lessons, then no-one would notice, they'd just notice I'm registered and wasn't there.

It is clear that both Eric and Flame, although unconnected to each other, found their school experiences alienating as a consequence of not being able to communicate fluently in Welsh. They each stated that they had both Welsh and English friends and that they communicated in English the majority of the time, when there was a bit of banter in Welsh between some of their friends, they felt able to follow the meaning generally. Despite understanding some Welsh, both Flame and Eric shared their feelings of marginalisation in many lessons because they could not follow what was being said. This they found deeply demotivating academically. Eric and Flame had good circles of friends at school with whom they identified and whose company they enjoyed. Despite this sense of belonging to a friendship group, they did not feel they belonged to the school community and did not feel that the school's practices allowed them to be themselves and to live out their own identities.

This underlines the difficulties involved in endeavouring to accommodate pupils from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds within a community where the dominant language and culture is different from that of an individual. The practices at Ysgol Tremorfa have been developed to meet the needs of the

majority of pupils who are fluent Welsh speakers and who wish to pursue their studies through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. Non-Welsh speakers may feel institutionally marginalised by these practices, being unable to participate fully in learning activities and, in such cases, the learning process can become associated with negative emotions (Weiner, 1984, 1985). This was certainly the case with Flame and Eric, where both shared their feelings of despondency and lack of motivation. They attributed their sense of marginalisation to the fact that lessons being conducted through the medium of Welsh made them feel a part of a situation over which they had no control. Seifert (2004) demonstrates that such attributions can lead to sustained expectations of failure and hopelessness and there was strong evidence of this process in both cases. Although both were prepared to exert some personal effort in aspects of their schoolwork, neither expected to achieve good academic results. By limiting their engagement with their work, they were able to protect their sense of self-worth, attributing any academic failure to the fact that lessons were conducted through the medium of Welsh rather than to personal shortcomings.

Parental Support.

During their interviews, each pupil shared that their families played a central role in how much importance they placed on schoolwork and how motivated they were to learn. Each pupil stated unambiguously that they were keen to make their families proud of them through educational achievement. This was naturally to be expected but it is worth noting that each pupil held the same

view and placed a great deal of emphasis on it as a motivating factor. To underline the importance of family to himself, Colin referred to this factor during both his interviews and in his written introduction:

The most important thing in my life is my family, especially my mum, sister, niece and nephews. If anyone says a bad word about them then they have got me to answer to.

The values and expectations of family members are seen to be one of the most powerful determinants of the nature and development of child identity within the family, friendship groups and school (Jenkins, 1996). In addition to individual family members being seen as important role models for the pupils, each pupil's values were also seen to be derived from the collective values of the family unit from which they came. These values are seen not only to reflect the family's attitudes towards relationships within the immediate and extended family but also to the relationships formed with friends and colleagues outside the family - in addition to their attitudes and expectations from work, education, financial matters, and their perceptions of cultural and leisure activities. It is therefore to be expected that children will often reflect the values and practices of the family unit they belong to. It can often be seen that high-achieving children live in households where high achievements are both valued and expected by its members and such achievements and successes have been realised by other family members in the past.

Several pupils saw educational success as a means by which they could repay their families for their involvement and support over the years. Sion referred to this when he said:

My father has always encouraged me to do well at school and he's helped me a lot with my work. I want to make him proud yeah, to give him something back for all the years he's given me yeah.

Pupils who had completed their GCSEs explained that achieving good results was important to them for two reasons. First, succeeding in their GCSEs was an important benchmark for themselves, where their efforts in learning bore fruit and enabled them to pursue further studies. Second, they were proud of their own personal successes, having also made their parents proud of their achievements. They recognised that their successes were instrumental in motivating them to pursue further success in future, suggesting that their positive emotions accompanying their perceptions of self-worth and self-efficacy were driving their desire to pursue future mastery goals. (Dweck, 1986; Weiner, 1985; Seifert 2004)

Similar sentiments were expressed by most of the pupils who took part in the study. For instance, Lois explained that her biggest motivation was her parents; not only had they invested a lot of their own time in helping her with her schoolwork but they had also bought books and other resources to enable her to succeed. She was aware that both her parents worked hard and were keen for her to be successful:

... so that I can have a better chance than they did to get a good job. My mother works as a legal secretary and she sometimes pulls my leg telling me that I should aim for a high salary and do as little as possible for it like some of her bosses! My going to university is very important to them.

However, although recognising the fact that she received a lot of support from her parents, she explained that they were not too pushy and she appreciated this. Hywel, who differentiated between supportive parents and pushy parents, also discussed this issue

It depends to what degree they (*the parents*) want them to succeed. ... If they just say 'do your best' then that's all right, but sometimes you see pushy parents putting their seven year olds on stage to sing and things like that ... and if you take that too far, it might cause some resentment... it might not have the desired effect, and some people might turn round and say 'you know what, I don't want to do this, you're trying to live your life through me'

Hywel was keen to emphasise his belief that parents should have 'realistic expectations' about their children's abilities and academic potential. He believed that the unrealistic expectations of parents could be highly demotivating for pupils who felt that they could not reach the high standards and expectations of parents. Drawing on personal experiences, where his parents had always supported him and asked him to do his best at all times, he

appreciated their viewpoint and thus did not feel pressurised about his work. However, he did feel a responsibility to both himself and his family to work hard.

Other pupils shared how competitive parents had put excessive pressure on their children to outperform their peers at school. Dafydd discussed the situation of his friend Gwyn, who was not content with being 'a good average' in his schoolwork. Gwyn's parents were keen for him to out-perform his friends academically but, although Gwyn worked hard and seldom saw his friends outside school, he was frequently disappointed when he failed academically. He was, at times, quite scathing towards some of his peers who had performed better than himself. Dafydd sympathised with Gwyn's situation and felt that he had been placed in an impossible position by parents, who made demands of him that he could not meet. He saw how Gwyn had become increasingly serious about his schoolwork over the years and, although Dafydd recognised Gwyn's efforts at school, he did not see individual motivation as a central factor in this process, rather the need to compete with others and endeavour academically in order to please his parents.

Some pupils who took part in the study were very aware of the support they had received from their parents and that some pupils were not as fortunate as themselves. In one of her interviews, Lois expressed this sentiment:

I feel sorry for them really because I'm used to having support from my mum and dad and other people, but some pupils don't have the same

opportunities, maybe their parents don't care as much about them and then that is passed down to the children I think and then they don't worry about how they do ... I'm sure that if they really want to do well, I'm sure that they think 'Oh, I hope everything goes alright, but I wish that mum or dad would help me more than they do'. I know that some want to do well and to go on to college or to get a good job but you know as well as I do that things aren't that simple if you don't have support.

There were 'voice' implications in Lois' observations as she was not speaking from direct experience but had observed and assumed what was happening in the lives of some of her peers. Other pupils expressed similar concerns about the lack of support they perceived their peers received from family members in their schoolwork; however, this seemed to be based on personal observation rather than actual experience of their situations. In general, pupils seemed to agree that, in this respect, there was an awareness that some of their peers did not share the same support that they received from family members and this was deemed to be a problem some pupils had to face.

Coping with family difficulties.

Several pupils raised the issue of family break-up in their interviews, describing how such events affected them, both personally and in their attitudes towards schoolwork. Some pupils shared personal experiences of their own family break-up, whilst others spoke of how they had tried to support friends whose families faced such difficulties. A common theme that emerged in accounts of

this process was the emotional turmoil that pupils faced when families experienced such problems. Feelings of isolation, dejection and hopelessness were common and enduring and, in some cases, pupils admitted to feelings of anger and betrayal. Many pupils felt that the support of their close friends had been invaluable to them, with such friendships becoming stronger as a result of the problems faced. Pupils who had encountered these problems within the family considered that close friendships were probably the most stable experiences in their lives at that time.

It is clear that facing profound experiences such as these have a significant effect on pupils' perceptions of themselves as individuals, as learners and on their personal academic motivation. Irrespective of how motivated pupils had been prior to such family difficulties, each pupil (while discussing family breakdown) stated that experiencing the break-up of their family had a very negative effect on their schoolwork. One explained his feelings at the time:

... my parents split up during my GCSEs – when I was in year 10, so that had a really big effect on my schoolwork, I just – I just lost interest really, basically, I stopped coming to school, stopped working, it didn't seem important to me then, and it still affects me now (*in year 13 at the time*) but less than it did at the time.

She recognised that her GCSE results were significantly lower than those expected had she not faced such family difficulties and declared that she had previously been a very competitive pupil, highly motivated and with high personal expectations. However, by the time she was 18 years of age, her

personal aspirations and motivation had improved considerably, which she attributed to the support of friends, family and teachers at school. She was hoping to go to university after completing her A levels and admitted that she had worked harder, during her A level studies, as a consequence of failing to engage properly with her GCSE studies a few years earlier.

Other pupils had not been able to make the same kind of recovery following their experiences of family break-up. One such pupil described how the events following the break-up of her parents' marriage had traumatised her considerably and continued to affect her work. Having previously been a highly motivated pupil at primary school, she shared her present feelings of detachment and alienation from the school community:

DT Do you remember when things started to change?

Pupil When my mum and dad started arguing and mum used to work nights, and this lass, she used to come round, we were all there, and we used to hear noises coming from dad's bedroom and we knew what they were doing that day, and that's when I started to think 'oh no, mum and dad are going to split up', 'oh no, this is going to happen, that's going to happen and all that stuff' Basically, it was when my mum and dad started splitting up.

DT That must have been very difficult for you,

Pupil Yeah. If my mum and dad hadn't split up, then there's no doubt that I'd probably still be an A* student you know, I'm quite sure... but you know... you can't change everything now can you... when my mum and dad were splitting up and I was in year 6, I was so upset because my mum did not tell us we were moving down here, she just moved, and then as soon as we got down here, she said 'right, you're staying down here' and that was it.

Feelings of powerlessness remained with this pupil during the ensuing years. Both she and her mother moved to a different area to live following the break-up which led her to change schools several times and, because of this, she had not felt settled in any of them. Although feeling alienated at her current school – Ysgol Tremorfa - she was not anti-school in general nor was she anti-schoolwork. However, her personal problems had eclipsed many of the positive feelings that she might have had towards her school achievements. This was evident when she shared the following:

... I do want to work hard, it's just that a lot of things hold me back and sometimes, I think 'well, what's the point?' I know I've got exams coming up in a couple of weeks (*GCSEs*) but sometimes, I just feel 'what's the point?' yeah. ... At times, it depends on what kind of week I've had, because if I've had a really good week, I'll work great, but if I've had a bad week, I just can't work properly.

She went on to say:

To be honest, the way I feel about my schoolwork at the moment is that I don't care if it goes good or bad. Things on the outside of school, my mum ... I know that I can always go back and re-sit my exams, so that's not really much of a problem, but, you know, the things that are going on in my life at the moment, school work's the least of the problems that I've got.

Although she felt an innate desire to work hard and to succeed in her learning, she felt overwhelmed by her personal problems and considered her schoolwork to be largely irrelevant at the time. This suggests that a pupil who was a highly motivated learner during her early school career had maintained many of the characteristics of her learning identity but, because of personal problems, was unable to engage with her learning in a meaningful and sustained manner at the time. She recognised that hard work was a crucial part of the learning process but she was unable to participate at that particular time. She also considered that, when things went well in her personal life, she was driven by the positive feelings that accompanied her successes. It is feasible that this might have been the reasoning behind her declaration that she might return to education in future, when her personal problems had diminished. It is also possible to argue that she was preparing herself for failing to achieve good results in her GCSEs by thinking of an alternative route to follow in future years. Her sense of self-efficacy was severely undermined by personal difficulties over which she had little personal control.

Whilst it was not unexpected to see a pupil who has experienced acute personal problems for many years attributing perceived academic failure to a situation

over which she had little personal control, what seemed most striking to the researcher was her obvious low self-esteem and the fact that she seemed resigned to her situation. When I asked her what were the most important things in her life at the time, she responded:

Pupil The most important things to me yeah, family always comes first,
 through thick and through thin, they're there yeah, then, it would be ...
 friends, ...then, it would be work, because I prefer work to school,
 'cause I get paid for it, then, it'd be school (+ *sounding weary*) and
 then it'd be... umm...

DT Where would you place yourself?

Pupil I don't know, next would be my animals, three dogs and one cat...

DT And where would you put yourself in relation to that?

Pupil I don't know, I don't know where I'd end up ...

Despite the fact that her family situation was largely the root of her personal problems, she continued to regard the institution as the most important factor in her life. However, her feelings of low self-esteem were emphasised by the lack of support she received from family members, leading her to feel trapped and isolated. She felt that her family did not help her because she was not worth helping.

Part (ii)

Issues relating to power

Schools are inherently hierarchical institutions where different individuals within the school community are located at different positions in a hierarchical continuum ranging from senior management, who are the most empowered, at one extreme, to new pupils, who are amongst the least empowered, at the other extreme. (Robinson & Taylor, 2007). During their school careers, pupils negotiate their individual positions of power within the hierarchy by gaining an understanding of their position on the continuum with respect to the positions of other members of the school community and either accepting or challenging it (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Navigating the power structures within a school community is a highly complex process and reflects the nature of an individual's identity, their understanding of the school's power structures and their responses to various socializing agents such as family, community and peer groups (Day, 1996: Rudduck & Flutter, 2000).

In this study, I explored pupils' attitudes to, and understanding of their status within Ysgol Tremorfa's power structure and the ways in which their appreciation of these processes had influenced the development of their learning identities, their sense of empowerment as learners and their personal motivation to learn. I also enquired regarding pupil perceptions of the means by which their social interactions and corresponding practices, both within and without

the school community, had influenced their learning development as a function of their identities and the way in which they participated in constructing meanings at Ysgol Tremorfa (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Given that the 'designed' practices (Wenger, 1998, p. 241) of Ysgol Tremorfa and the practices exercised by its members, by virtue of their membership of certain social groupings (family, friendship groups, linguistic/cultural groups) may be given varying hierarchical status by different pupils, I was interested to learn how dominant practices evolve over time. It was also of interest to ascertain how those practices affect a pupil's motivation as a function of their participation in the learning process.

In general, it can be seen that pupils were able to demonstrate an acute awareness of the power hierarchy at school. They were equally aware of the fact that they were amongst the least empowered members of the school community. Pupils also recognised that younger pupils seemed to be less empowered than pupils who had been at school for a significant time, although several students recognised that this was not always the case. Additionally, the majority of pupils showed an appreciation of the fact that not all pupils of a similar age or ability level were equally empowered within the hierarchical structure. Some were able to understand that subtle power differences existed within their relationships with peers, in addition to the relative hierarchical position they, as individuals, occupied in relation to other individuals and groups during different stages of their academic careers. The research shows that the majority of pupils interviewed had a considerable understanding of the

multiplicity and diversity of power relationships that existed within the school community. This understanding was based on their personal experiences at Ysgol Tremorfa and often derived from discussions amongst themselves.

The majority of pupils seemed to accept the inevitability of being part of a power structure whilst at school and, although some questioned the appropriateness of the *status quo*, it appeared that that which concerned most pupils was the potential exploitation of an individual's disempowerment by others within the hierarchy. A large number of pupils referred to different situations of power inequalities, where disempowered individuals and groups were not perceived to have been treated fairly by those more empowered than themselves. Because of this perception of unfair treatment, there was a strong feeling, amongst pupils, that this was unacceptable behaviour and showed a lack of respect towards the disempowered individual or group in question. All pupils interviewed considered that the process of exercising respect or disrespect towards pupils was a powerful determinant of a pupil's motivation to work and to achieve academically.

In the following sections pupils' views are presented with respect to different forms of power relationships at the school. These relationships describe the more explicit forms, such as their perceptions of lacking a 'voice' at school and their relationships with adults, and the more implicit relationships with peers, where power differences were seen to be more fluid and subtle in nature.

Pupils, empowerment and 'voice'.

During interview, several pupils expressed disappointment at the fact that they were not, neither as individuals nor collectively in groups, consulted by teachers regarding their views on various aspects of school life. Although they realised that certain pupils had been elected as Registration Group or Year Representatives on the School Council, which met several times a year, pupils continued to feel resigned to the fact that their voices were not listened to at school and that they had little influence on School Council agendas. Pupils felt that this was a significantly disempowering situation. Hywel's view typifies some of the pupils' responses regarding this issue:

I know that there are registration group representatives and everything, I used to be one. But the only thing that happened was that we'd turn up and we'd leave after a while because no one wanted to listen really. Some people turned up but they did not have the confidence to say what they really thought, or they thought that they might be told off by some of the teachers if they said what was on their minds. I didn't see much point in going.

The main pupil bodies at Ysgol Tremorfa, set up with the aim of providing pupils with a voice within the institution, were not perceived by pupils to be either effective or of great value to them as groups or individuals. Because of this perception, they questioned whether pupils actually benefited from meetings held by these bodies. Eric explained how, following complaints by

members of the School Council, the standard of pupils' toilets had been improved; however, he added, with some scepticism:

...they were disgusting before, really bad, you wouldn't want to go there. But what annoyed me was that we had to complain and complain before anything was done. The school should have made sure that the toilets were clean and not broken before we complained. All that happened after we made a fuss was that we had clean toilets, so what?

Several pupils explained feelings of marginalisation and the fact that their views were dismissed when they brought up school matters of concern to themselves, with some of their teachers. Issues raised with teachers included concerns regarding too many pupils in some classes, the amount of homework set, the scheduling and length of homework, the lack of lockers at school for keeping possessions safe, the limited choice of school dinners available, the lack of a Common Room for Year 12 and 13 pupils and the lack of a place to go at break or lunchtimes during inclement weather. Pupils perceived that those with power often ignored opinions, which they deemed important, regarding the way life at school could be improved, leaving them with feelings of frustration and marginalisation. Dafydd summed this up :

...it's like we don't count really, but school should be for us, they should ask us what we think and then do something about it to show that they've listened.

I found the use of the word 'they', in this context, most illuminating; it was commonly used by all the pupils when discussing such issues. This not only indicated a perception of polarisation between pupils and teachers and School Managers but also underlined the feelings of disempowerment pupils felt at what was described by many as 'their school'. These perceptions of personal disempowerment, in turn, led to pupils feeling a significant degree of alienation and lack of ownership with respect school practices. Such perceptions of alienation and lack of power could potentially substantially affect the manner in which pupils develop and participate as community members.

Wenger (1998) argues that students in a learning establishment "need ways of having an effect on the world and making their actions matter" (p271) and this effect is seen as a crucial component of developing their identities as individuals within that body. 'Having an effect' is also essential in reinforcing a pupil's CoP membership and sense of belonging. It can be argued that membership of a school's community ought to be within a reciprocal relationship, with benefits for both the individual and the collective community. Such a relationship ought also to be empowering for the individual concerned, where he or she feels of importance to the school, ensuring, in turn, that the community itself develops into a body of relevance, accountable to its members and capable of responding positively to their needs and contributions. When interviewed, the pupils of Ysgol Tremorfa shared their perceptions that this vital relationship was a missing factor within the school's hierarchical structure, leading to the belief that their voices were unheard and their opinions and suggestions had little effect on school practices. There was a consensual view amongst the pupils that

their school community was weaker and less successful because of this lack of reciprocal communication and respect.

Teachers empowering pupils

The effects that relationships between teachers and pupils have upon pupil motivation were a central component of this study and form a substantial portion of the pupils' interviews. As senior members of a learning CoP, teachers have a significant responsibility in assisting newcomers to integrate and be included within the school's practices. Teachers usually have long and varied experiences of helping pupils to become full participants and in helping them to engage fully with their learning at school. However, groups of teachers are rarely homogeneous in nature and each individual brings to their school their own particular experiences and values. These values and experiences are then integrated into their specific teaching practices. Of particular interest to this study were pupil perceptions regarding the role of their teachers, not only in the teaching of specific academic subjects but also in promoting a set of values and ensuring that social contexts within lessons were conducive to learning and wider participation.

Many pupils shared in interview how they had developed positive relationships with their teachers since entering Ysgol Tremorfa. However, it was clear that they felt closer relationships to certain teachers than to others. For example, several pupils described how they had developed a close relationship with their registration teacher or a teacher who taught a subject they particularly enjoyed.

When interviewed, it became clear that a relationship based on trust had been established between some pupils and their teachers, where the pupils shared that they trusted their teachers' academic judgements as well as the pastoral care offered by them. These relationships were perceived, by the pupils, to be an important foundation upon which to build their identities both as learners and as individual young people.

However, several pupils shared that they did not always form positive relationships with some teachers, citing instances of perceived favouritism, being singled out unfairly, feeling that their teacher did not like them (individually, as a group or as a class), or referring to instances when teachers became sarcastic towards pupils. Experiencing negative relationships such as these was often seen to have a significant, detrimental effect on a pupil's motivation to achieve and some pupils stated that they had, at times, withdrawn their efforts in lessons given by teachers with whom they felt they lacked a positive relationship. However, several pupils recognised that such actions were detrimental to their own educational interests and eventually reverted to their normal state of motivation and effort within lessons. Other pupils, however, adopted a perceived strategy of penalising their teacher by not working in class and continued to limit their engagement with the learning process within specific subject areas.

It became apparent that pupils valued discussions with their teachers about their work and this was often preferred to written comments in their workbooks, although comprehensive written assessments were also generally appreciated.

Pupils valued greatly the individual feedback they received regarding their work and felt that such discussions provided motivation and increased confidence, both in their work and in themselves as individuals. In addition, pupils felt more empowered, both as learners and as young people, and the resulting positive emotions experienced following such feedback from teachers impelled them to seek further opportunities to succeed academically. Eric describes his feelings following a discussion of his work with some of his teachers:

...it makes me feel good yeah, discussing my work yeah, not everyone else's, but my work, warts and all, it made me feel as if I mattered and that the teacher wanted me to pass, it feels good when that happens, it makes me want to do well yeah. I believe that I can do well, it makes me more confident yeah and that's good

This underlines the great potential that discussions between pupils and their teachers have to increase a pupil's self-efficacy and desire to succeed, so increasing the individual's sense of empowerment. Often, pupils were seen to be greatly encouraged by praise from their teachers. When praise was apportioned, by a teacher to a pupil for a simple task completed effectively, it was often appreciated and engendered positive emotions in the recipient. Praise was perceived to empower them as pupils, whether for the standard of their work, for their general effort or for their good behaviour. Pupils perceived that the praise received from teachers often confirmed to them the feeling they were positive, active and valued participants within the school's learning community and strengthened their sense of belonging and purpose.

However, a lack of praise from their teachers, especially when pupils felt they deserved positive acknowledgment for their efforts, was often seen as demoralising, as undermining their confidence and as being unfair. Pupils were seen to be annoyed by:

...teachers being nitpickers, just telling me about my mistakes and not telling me 'well done' for what I'd got right

Dafydd was critical of the selective praising by some teachers of some pupils and not others, despite similar academic performance in lessons:

when the teacher tells Rhys that he's done well and praises him, I think 'what about me? I've been working hard too, why don't you say something to me' it just made me feel invisible, as if I didn't matter

This was not a unique experience, with several other pupils sharing that they had faced similar experiences in lessons, although they were not able to state whether their teachers had ignored them deliberately. The experience undermined Dafydd's confidence and he felt aggrieved that his efforts and achievements were left unrecognised whilst his friend had received a positive reaction from his teacher. His perceptions of disempowerment in the situation led to a lack of motivation in that subject. He saw little point in further endeavour as he did not receive his teacher's recognition for his efforts. Dafydd shared the fact that he did not feel the same level of respect towards some teachers as others, believing that respect was not reciprocated to him as an

individual by certain teachers; this resulted in negative emotions, on his part, towards certain aspects of his learning process.

All pupils interviewed recognised that the teacher/pupil relationship was inherently based on substantial power differences, with teachers holding a more powerful position than pupils. Pupils also understood and accepted that power inequalities were mainly a consequence of the different power attributed to adults and minors both at school and society in general:

they're adults and we're children, so they're bound to be higher up the
line than us

and :

they're paid to come here to do a job and we have to do what they tell us

This was typical of many pupils' responses. The superior power status of teachers was also considered by pupils to be synonymous with their wider life experiences. The majority of pupils were of the opinion that such a wealth of life experiences should also help teachers to understand more easily and to sympathise with their own particular situation. Gareth explained:

they've been pupils themselves so they can teach us a lot about what
they know

With reference to matters such as heavy workloads and anxieties regarding examinations, pupils felt that, whilst the majority of teachers were sensitive to their concerns and problems, at times a minority of teachers placed pupils under a great deal of pressure. Describing this kind of insensitivity, Eleri shared the following during interview:

We've had a lot of work this year (*year 11*), a huge amount at times, and sometimes we have more than one coursework to hand in the same week. I wish the teachers would spread things out a bit more.

Several pupils stated that they had worked late in the evenings to meet their deadlines and often felt tired the following day, perceiving the pressure they faced to be unfair. Others shared that they had missed coursework deadlines because they were not prepared to work long hours in the evening after they had been at school all day. One pupil had missed a period of school in order to catch up with his coursework at home. There was general agreement amongst pupils that very heavy workloads made them feel overwhelmed and anxious regarding the degree of control they had over certain aspects of their learning. Many pupils were clearly frustrated that teachers had not consulted them when school coursework deadlines had been designated. One pupil asked the question:

... don't the teachers talk to each other before telling us when to hand in our coursework? If they'd asked us, we'd have told them what other coursework we had to do.

There was a strong feeling that problems with coursework deadlines were symptomatic of a more general lack of pupil involvement in decisions that affected them directly.

Despite this perceived lack of consultation, most pupils appeared to accept the inevitability of the power inequalities that existed between themselves and their teachers, as long as their teachers did not exploit those differences. However, a small minority of pupils described situations where pupils were treated in a different manner from their peers. Hywel shared his belief that the type of response given to some pupils, by teachers, varied according to their socio-economic background:

...I think that some are treated more badly than others because of where they live. I think that where you come from is a factor when people make generalisations about you, if you come from here then you're supposed to do this but if you come from the other side of town then you'll do that.

He added that the pupils who came from large estates of social housing were, in his opinion, treated less favourably by some teachers than pupils who came from the more affluent areas of town. Hywel strongly believed that this was an unfair and discriminatory practice on behalf of his teachers. This was most illuminating, as he stated that he lived in one of the more affluent parts of the town and was concerned that some of his friends had been treated less favourably than himself on the basis of their socio-economic status. Acknowledging that it was impossible for every pupil to be treated in an identical manner by teachers, he suggested that everyone should be treated

equally well, with all pupils having access to additional learning support, if required, to ensure that they 'reached their potential'. Hywel was also aware of the possibility that some pupils felt sensitive about outsiders knowing that they received additional learning or pastoral support and felt teachers should not draw attention to this when support was offered. For instance, he suggested that teachers might give pupils extra time to complete their tasks if they were aware that pupils were experiencing personal problems although he was keen to emphasise that such concessions should not be given in a condescending manner.

Pupils also felt that there were ambiguities in the types of pupil behaviour accepted by teachers, with pupils in lower sets perceived to be 'getting away' with misbehaviour that would not be accepted in the top sets. For instance, Dafydd was placed in the top sets in certain subjects but in the lower sets in others and had witnessed different types of behaviour in different sets, remarking that:

I wouldn't get away with throwing things and swearing like Daniel did
the other day, I get told off if I'm just talking...

He described his sense of injustice regarding this by citing how some pupils, who are generally known to be badly behaved, appear to be rewarded by the school for very limited compliance with school rules by being allowed to go on trips, whereas:

...the rest of us are usually quite well behaved, especially the girls, and yet we never have trips and rewards like these boys get. I don't think that's fair at all.

Dafydd perceived that pupils who were normally well behaved and conformed with school rules missed out because of their consistent good behaviour. Other pupils who took part in the study also voiced this perception of reward for 'slightly less misbehaviour than usual'. There was held a widespread view amongst those interviewed that pupils who were badly behaved and consistently spoiled lessons for other children should not be rewarded in any way and that rewards should be given to those pupils who achieved what was perceived, by a majority, to be something of genuine value, such as putting a great deal of effort into completing a piece of work or for helping other pupils overcome their difficulties. Susan explained her thoughts on the matter:

... the reward itself isn't important but I don't think those boys deserve anything, but someone like Karen (fellow pupil), you know Karen yeah? she's really clever but she helps a lot of us with our work, she'll sit down with us and explain the work if we don't understand it, I think that someone like her should be rewarded for what she does...

She implied that pupils are able to distinguish between activities that are of little value and activities that are of greater value to them as individuals and as members of a wider community. Whilst all the pupils interviewed stated that they did not consider the pursuit of a reward, such as a trip, as sufficient motivation to ensure they worked harder, many shared that they found the

giving of rewards to pupils who misbehaved demeaning to the rest of the school and capable of demotivating other pupils who were normally well behaved and worked hard. Some of the older pupils were of the opinion that such rewards carried very little long-term benefit to the school and its pupils but considered that working hard and achieving good educational standards were far more important and rewarding to both the school and its pupils. Susan and Dafydd placed a higher value on the pursuit of intrinsic goals than they did extrinsic goals (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Ames, 1992) believing that those pursuing extrinsic goals did so for purely selfish reasons and did little to enhance or benefit the wider learning community.

Furthermore, Susan suggested that, in any system of rewards at school, pupils themselves should be allowed to nominate other pupils for such rewards. She shared her belief that pupils should be empowered by being given a voice to express their admiration and gratitude to some of their peers, if those peers had made a valuable contribution to school life or had assisted others in some way. She further suggested that pupils and teachers may choose to reward different pupils, based on differing criteria, as both teachers and pupils had different perceptions regarding the everyday life of the school and its members. Citing specific examples where pupils had supported each other through difficult times during a family break-up or had assisted other pupils to catch up with their work after illness, she shared her belief that pupils' positive contributions to the school community are often overlooked and might be taken for granted by both teachers and peers.

Classroom Settings

Discussions between teachers and pupils in class, including question and answer sessions, were interpreted by some pupils as events where the teacher exercised a substantial amount of power. When carried out effectively, pupils perceived that being encouraged to take part in the learning discourse was generally a positive and empowering experience where they were active participants in the construction of new knowledge and understandings. There was, however, concern expressed that some shy or less able pupils could feel threatened by whole class discussions. Because of this concern, pupils expected their teachers to be sensitive to the personalities and abilities of specific pupils and to avoid placing such individuals in situations in which they felt uncomfortable. Some pupils shared their concerns regarding providing an incorrect answer to some teachers, as they feared a public rebuff from those particular teachers in front of their friends. This fear appeared to be related to specific teachers and was sometimes based on hearsay or the anecdotal evidence of other pupils rather than their direct, personal experience. Pupils perceived that teachers in such situations who used humour when reacting to an incorrect answer given to them in the classroom helped to reduce the anxiety felt by some pupils. Keri shared that having publicly provided the wrong measurement of 8 centimetres in answer to her teacher's question, he had responded humorously:

I like the centimetres, I like them very much, but I'm not sure about the eight, would you like to try again.

Her teacher's response had defused and averted any possible embarrassment she might have faced and had made her confident to continue taking an active and public part in the lesson. Importantly, her perceived sense of self-worth remained intact and she had not experienced negative emotions as a consequence of her initial mistake.

During lessons, pupils expected their teachers to manage classroom behaviour in order for them to explore and enjoy learning without being disturbed by other pupils. However, they explained that they did not enjoy lessons where they felt forced, by the teacher, to be quiet throughout the lesson for no understandable reason. There was an expectation that teachers should acknowledge pupils' need to converse with each other as they learned and it appeared that pupils considered the social dimension of their lessons as an important context of the learning process. However, there was general agreement that such discussions should be managed, by the teacher, in order to ensure an effective learning environment. Pupils considered the use, by teachers, of expressions such as 'can you please carry on with your work' or 'I need you to complete this task within 10 minutes' as legitimate and acceptable requests. However, when a teacher directed pupils to complete a task "because I'm telling you to do it", they perceived that teachers were treating them as children and they found this undermined any sense of autonomy they felt about their learning.

During interview, Lois was eager to discuss the difficulties associated with working in a classroom that was too noisy. This matter had not been on my original interview schedule but it was clearly of great concern to Lois. She

expressed a general preference for working independently in lessons, rather than working in groups or with partners, and preferred working through questions by herself when needing to synthesise ideas from textbooks or other sources. In some lessons, she felt able to work quietly, successfully and independently; however, during other lessons, she found it difficult to concentrate because the level of classroom noise frustrated her efforts to work. She felt unable tell her teachers as it was her perception that most of her peers enjoyed chatting whilst they worked and she did not wish to be seen by others as a spoilsport. When I explored this issue further with other pupils, two other girls shared the fact that they sometimes found it difficult to work if the class was noisy. None of the other pupils interviewed found it difficult to concentrate when fellow pupils were chatting during lessons; in fact some of the boys readily admitted to being quite noisy individuals themselves. When asked to consider whether their boisterous behaviour might make things difficult for other pupils in lessons, the general view was that a pupil could ignore them or ask the teacher to be moved to sit somewhere quieter. In some cases, there appeared to be little realisation that their actions in class might hinder some of their peers as they learned.

These examples underline some of the complexities involved in the process of ensuring that pupils maintain a degree of control and independence over their own learning experience, whilst still being guided towards successful learning outcomes by their teachers. Central to this procedure is a teacher's effective communication of both learning objectives and methods and the teacher's ability to set behavioural boundaries to the children concerned. If a teacher endeavoured to explain to pupils the need for quiet contemplation of a complex

idea or concept, the majority of pupils would find this an acceptable proposition. However, some pupils stated that they would readily challenge being told by a teacher to remain quiet for no apparent reason. Negotiation between teacher and pupil was perceived to be an empowering process, whereas being directed to follow the teacher's commands and to feel little control over their own learning process was considered to be a disempowering experience.

In some cases, for instance, in the case of a pupil's perception of excessive classroom noise or in large classes where pupils felt 'lost in the crowd', pupils felt unable to communicate their own difficulties to their teachers in order to improve their learning opportunities. Although each pupil who stated they had experienced such problems considered themselves to be highly motivated in general, their participation in learning was lessened when they felt a lack of control. Their emotional responses to such events tended to be negative in nature, citing 'I feel let down', or 'it isn't fair', and 'I'm not important enough' as reasons to disengage from the learning process. Reflecting the centrality of the social context in which individuals may engage or fail to engage with their learning (Weiner, 1984, 1985), these pupils felt that their desire to learn was obstructed by external factors beyond their control and this had a significantly disempowering effect upon them. These particular examples demonstrate how teaching and learning practices, both formal and informal, do not always succeed in accommodating the needs of all participants at all times and the practices that develop over time may come to marginalise some members of a particular learning community (Wenger, 1998).

The effects of favouritism.

All pupils interviewed showed a strong sense of fairness and perceived that being treated with respect at school was an essential quality. In this context, pupils were of the opinion that all teachers had a responsibility to lead by example when fostering their relationships with pupils at school by treating all pupils with fairness and sensitivity. Furthermore, pupils perceived themselves to have an equal responsibility to respect their teachers and those within their peer groups. However, it was widely recognised that not all pupils adhered to these simple reciprocal standards and pupils expected their teachers, when required to do so, to deal with unruly pupils in a firm but fair manner. In general, the majority of pupils considered that their teachers treated them, and their peers, with fairness and justice. However, this was not always the case.

A number of pupils shared accounts of the way in which some teachers had shown favouritism towards some of their peers, whilst other teachers appeared to 'pick on' pupils for what was perceived by students as no obvious reason. Pupils felt that the lack of consistency displayed by some teachers in the way they dealt with misbehaviour in class both confused and undermined pupil confidence. There existed a common perception, amongst interviewees, that the variable levels of respect teachers showed to some pupils in class could foster changes of behaviour in response to their inconsistent approach. It was perceived by many that changes in behaviour amongst pupils, in response to teacher inconsistency, could be manifested through the withdrawal of academic

effort, disruption in class and pupil arrogance, believing themselves impervious to teacher discipline.

Several pupils discussed perceptions regarding teachers' attitudes towards pupils placed in different sets. For example, Leah-Jade and Keri both described how some teachers treated pupils in lower sets differently from pupils in higher sets. Not only did they perceive that certain teachers held different expectations regarding standards of behaviour and effort in class between members of the top and bottom sets but they also felt that pupils belonging to the higher sets received preferential treatment during extracurricular activities such as school productions of musical performances. This view was echoed by Eric who perceived that, in some lessons, teachers sometimes seemed to ignore certain pupils when they asked for help while spending a disproportionate amount of time with other pupils – those perceived to be the 'teacher's pets'. Eric often responded to this perceived favouritism towards pupils from higher sets by withdrawing effort:

what's the point of trying? - they're not interested in someone like me,
they don't care what I do

Eric's personal experiences demonstrate how a pupil's self esteem can be undermined when other pupils are perceived to receive more attention from a teacher than they themselves receive. This perception of favouritism often leads to the pupil becoming unmotivated, as manifested by the withdrawing of effort in lessons. In such situations, pupils may feel that they have little control over

their learning process and come to believe that their teachers lack interest in them as individuals in comparison with other pupils (perceived as teachers' favourites). When encountering problems with work, pupils who are perceived to receive insufficient attention from their teacher or are deemed to be ignored, are seen to experience emotions of anxiousness and anger and often become resigned to academic failure. Favouritism by teachers towards other pupils often has a detrimental effect on an individual's motivation and the development of their individual learning identity.

Another pupil, Hywel, was clearly annoyed by what he saw as the display of favouritism, by some teachers, towards certain pupils because of their specific family membership. He shared a feeling that certain teachers, who had attended university with the parents of some pupils, provided favourable treatment to those pupils when compared with their attitude to others in the same class. Hywel clearly perceived this as being grossly unfair and suggested that many pupils, in response to this, might feel left out and resentful. He believed that the unequal treatment of pupils was highly de-motivating and undermined a pupil's commitment to learn. The fact that he referred to how 'we don't see the point in trying' rather than 'I don't see the point in trying' suggests that he was sharing not only his personal thoughts regarding this issue but also the collective view of his peers. When asked to expand on the matter, he confirmed this to be the case.

When pupils perceived that they were being treated less favourably than their peers, it provoked within them strong emotional responses affecting their

perceptions of themselves as learners. Pupils saw favouritism as a deeply disempowering experience, with the personal effort and achievement of some individuals not receiving the same recognition, by teachers, as that of some of their peers. This lack of recognition for hard work had a significant effect on their feelings of motivation.

Hywel responded differently from Eric to displays of perceived favouritism by teachers with regard to certain students. Although clearly annoyed with the situation, having lost respect for his teachers Hywel normally continued, almost stoically, with his tasks until they were completed to a satisfactory standard. He considered that his learning outcome was of more importance than dwelling on the unfairness of the situation experienced. In voicing concerns about the effects of favouritism on pupils, Hywel was of the opinion that not every pupil would cope as well as he had done in similar circumstances. This underlines the range of potential pupil responses that different pupils might experience in a similar situation.

As in Weiner's (1984, 1985) assertion, an individual's attributions for similar outcomes may vary significantly. Such attributions may or may not occur within the individual's control, resulting in the varying emotional responses made by different individuals in each situation. In Eric's case, some learning tasks were perceived to be difficult and he needed assistance to complete them. The difficulty of the tasks and the lack of help from his teachers were both external causes of his problems, over which he had very little control. The helplessness he experienced was a deeply negative emotion that resulted in his

becoming resigned to failure. Feeling that there was little purpose in persevering academically and having failed in the task, Eric became demotivated and, by withdrawing effort, became protective of his self-worth (Covington, 1984).

Hywel's reaction to displays of favouritism in lessons was significantly different from Eric's and, because of this, his emotional responses also differed considerably. Hywel's ability to complete difficult tasks successfully was a result of personal effort and skill - factors over which it can be seen that he had substantial control. His success in completing his tasks engendered positive emotions within him, which, in turn, enabled him to be successful in his learning despite a perceived lack of support from his teacher. Hywel could therefore attribute his success to factors over which he had considerable control. This was a strongly empowering experience for Hywel, which was to determine future learning strategies and successes. His sense of self-worth had been greatly enhanced following success through personal effort and skill. The causal relationship between effort and academic success reinforced Hywel's motivation (Seifert, 2004) and reinforced his expectation to succeed in future.

These two examples should be considered within the context in which they occurred. Pupils associated particular learning expectations and outcomes with specific teachers and they did not appear to adopt the same behaviours and attitudes in all their lessons, with all teachers. In some lessons, Eric worked consistently and conscientiously and recognised that his efforts bore fruit. He enjoyed discussing his work with his teachers and experienced positive

emotions when he completed his tasks successfully. This suggests that attribution theories of motivation (Weiner, 1984, 1985) are deeply contextualised and their specific contexts are significant determinants of an individual's feelings of empowerment and motivation. The social interactions of lessons, together with pupils' interpretations of those interactions, are crucial elements in determining an individual's motivation to learn. Furthermore, although both Eric and Hywel had responded differently to displays of favouritism by some teachers, they had both reached different outcomes in the lessons discussed, and their individual responses, in general, had protected their sense of self worth.

Pupils influencing each other.

All pupils negotiate a multitude of relationships with different groups of pupils during their school years and these relationships have the potential either to improve or reduce an individual's motivation to achieve academically. Issues relating to an individual's identity as a consequence of their membership of various friendship groups have already been discussed (see also Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Jackson, 2002; & Duffield *et al*, 2000). It was seen that friends frequently shared common values that have been negotiated, over a period of time, by group members (Jenkins, 1996) and these values are reflected in members' attitudes towards their schoolwork, aspirations and motivation. Group members are able to sustain and encourage each other when there is a high degree of motivation apparent. However, in friendship groups without motivation, members are likely to reinforce a view that their schooling is

irrelevant, attribute their failures to external, uncontrollable factors and adopt behaviour patterns that draw attention away from their lack of academic achievement.

Alignment with and membership of friendship groups involves the negotiation of complex power issues between various group members and this may significantly affect an individual's understanding of his or her learning identity and motivation to learn. Such complexities are highlighted by Wenger (1998) in his discussion of different modes of belonging to a group or community. By identifying with other group members and feeling that they have a contribution to make to the values of the group, an individual may become empowered and gain a heightened sense of potential to achieve. As a result, an individual can become motivated and confident of her/his ability to achieve goals. However, Wenger (*ibid.*) warns that alignment with a group may also be 'blind and disempowering' (p. 181) when the individual concerned unquestioningly adopts the group's values without considering the degree of personal change needed in order to conform with the dominant values held by the group.

Although an individual may feel a strong sense of allegiance to his/her friendship group, it is necessary to consider on whose terms membership of that group has been negotiated. Pupils who feel that they are active participants in the group's activities and discourse, debating and sharing views, supporting and being supported by other members, often feel empowered and self-confident. Other pupils, who have had to assimilate changes of attitude, views and behaviours in order to become members of a specific group, often become

disempowered by the process of adopting the group's practices and values. In such situations, individuals can feel overwhelmed by other, more active and assertive group members and, in some extreme situations, can feel coerced into behaving in ways that are alien to them as individuals.

During interview, Eleri discussed how membership of a particular friendship group had required her to adopt an identity she found difficult to maintain, where the behaviour and attitudes of her friends increasingly conflicted with her own. The experiences of belonging to this particular group had undermined her understanding of her own identity. She became confused regarding that which she expected to receive from, and was expected to contribute to, her friendship group, eventually feeling that she was compromising her own values by remaining a member of the group concerned. Membership of that particular friendship group had been a deeply disempowering experience for Eleri and the pressure to change her identity, in order to gain acceptance by other group members, had been unacceptable; she did not feel that she could 'just be myself' when in their company. When Eleri felt that she could no longer remain a part of that group, she began to distance herself from its members and, although it can be argued that she was empowering herself by doing this, she did not feel empowered at the time. The bullying by former group members that followed her leaving succeeded in undermining any such sense of potential empowerment. These experiences had a significant impact on Eleri's development as a learner and ultimately on her academic achievements. She found difficulty focusing on her schoolwork whilst endeavouring to make sense of the difficult relationships that she had recently faced. Feelings of

powerlessness regarding her circumstances had a significant negative effect upon her self-perception as an able and confident learner.

The effects of bullying.

Several pupils, both male and female, discussed at interview their experiences of being bullied at school and, while expecting to learn of some cases of bullying, I was surprised that eight of the fourteen pupils studied had been, at some stage, victims of bullying at school. Whilst not making any claims about how representative the interviewed group of pupils were of the school's population, the high proportion of victims suggests that various forms of bullying were a real and significant problem at Ysgol Tremorfa.

Some pupils perceived and understood that they had been bullied as a result of external factors beyond their control, such as suffering from chronic illness, belonging to a different ethnic group, or because they were seen to have lived in the 'wrong part of town'. Such individuals often perceived themselves as being specifically targeted, unfairly in their opinion, by bullies and, although initially experiencing emotions of fear and uncertainty, they became sufficiently annoyed about their situations to empower themselves, with the help of others, and deal successfully with their problems. They had effectively learned to disarm their bullies by ignoring their words and actions, giving an outward appearance of carrying on with their lives regardless of the words or deeds of their tormentors.

Anna had suffered bullying for many weeks at the hands of a gang of girls within the school. This bullying had started as a whispering campaign, which then developed into name-calling and arguments, eventually culminating in a vicious physical attack which left her requiring medical attention. Anna had not been aware of the reasons for her being bullied but understood, deep down within herself, that she had done nothing to deserve such treatment from a group of her peers. The uncertainty she had experienced during this time had undermined her personal confidence, making her fearful for her own physical safety. As a result, Anna felt unable to attend school for fear of further physical attack:

... I just used to sit at home and pretend to my parents that I came to school, I know now that I was stupid not to come to school, but I just didn't feel safe, I didn't feel safe on my way home, and there's so many places at this school where you could bump into someone and no one else would see what's going on...

Her experience underlines the feelings of helplessness and powerlessness that victims of bullying often have to face, where their fear of being physically and emotionally hurt is so overwhelming that their judgement becomes impaired. As a result of these fears, victims often take decisions that fail to provide benefit to themselves in the long term. By withdrawing from school, Anna felt safe but she was also aware of the fact that her learning would eventually suffer. Her experiences are not unique and other pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa divulged equally painful experiences at the hands of their bullies. Eleri developed considerable health problems as a result of the stress experienced whilst being bullied and

she eventually had to change schools. As a result, she had found it extremely difficult to trust other pupils and to form new friendships. She often felt isolated at school, which had a significant effect on her attitude towards learning. Classroom group work was perceived as being a painful experience and she often found herself alone or being marginalised within groups in which her teachers had placed her. She was fully aware that she was underachieving academically but felt trapped by her situation and unable to overcome her difficulties. Eleri consequently felt extremely disempowered at school.

Of particular interest to this study was the manner in which different pupils dealt with being bullied and how such bullying affected their motivation to learn. Despite the bullying, it is interesting to note that some pupils were able to develop identities as proficient learners and not as respective victims of their bullies. Many pupils admitted that they stayed at home when the bullying was perceived to be overwhelming and, as a consequence, missed varying amounts of schoolwork. Whilst succeeding in catching up with the majority of their work upon their return to school, some pupils shared that the work was completed in a mechanical manner as they found it easier to immerse themselves in schoolwork rather than face their tormentors. Some pupils recognised that their educational motivation deteriorated as a consequence of their bullying but it would appear that those pupils who were able to recover fairly quickly from their experiences were also seen to return to previous levels of motivation within a fairly short timescale.

However, those pupils who had undergone prolonged periods of bullying by their peers had found the experience extremely distressing, resulting in feelings of deep insecurity regarding personal identity. They were seen to become extremely demotivated with regard to their schoolwork. Two unconnected pupils perceived a direct relationship between how deeply threatened they felt by their bullies and their personal attitude towards their schoolwork. Both felt overwhelmed by feelings of powerlessness and had retreated into worlds, both psychological and real in nature, where they felt the need to regain some control over their respective situations. The process of successfully rebuilding their confidence as individuals and, to a lesser extent, as learners had taken many months, during which time they had heavily relied upon the support of close family and friends. Some acknowledged that Ysgol Tremorfa, as an institution, had shown a positive response when informed about the bullying. However, pupils also perceived the support offered as limited in nature, believing the school placed a greater emphasis on identifying and stopping the bullies than on adequately supporting individuals who had been bullied.

Pupils who eventually succeeded in coming to terms with and recovering from their bullying experiences felt they had become stronger individuals, having learned strategies of protection against any similar future negative experiences. Pupils described bullies as 'losers' and 'quite pathetic really by themselves', and as individuals with whom they did not wish to identify themselves in any way. It is interesting to note that both Anna and Eleri, who had both suffered sustained bullying during their time at Ysgol Tremorfa, resolved to increase commitment to their school work in order to succeed, perceiving this as a means

of disempowering their bullies. They held a shared belief that personal educational success and attainment would be a positive means by which the bullies could be shown that their negative actions had failed. Anna described her feelings in the following way:

I think that now I'm successful, I've managed to pay them back by succeeding, they haven't been able to do that, so now I'm in a better position than them, but before, I felt that they were superior to me because they were bullying me.

Through personal analysis of their own individual experiences of bullying, pupils were able to explore aspects of their own in great detail. They were able to recall the personal discovery of qualities such as trust, tenacity, 'rightful indignation', self-belief and inner strength and it became clear that the process of reflecting on their recovery from bullying provided a realisation of renewed self-empowerment and resilience. However, I was unsure whether all bullied pupils shared such a positive attitude, as some displayed a resignation to being bullied again at some future time in their lives. When presented with such resignation, I reverted to my teacher status and discussed strategic options with pupils should they be bullied again.

Institutional Disempowerment

In addition to the way hierarchies of power within the school affect individual educational attainment, a minority of pupils highlighted further examples of how specific school practices disempowered pupils, placing them at a

disadvantage with respect to the majority. Certain pupils felt that both they and their peers were at a disadvantage because of 'how things are done at school', and that this significantly affected their learning. Others, however, felt that their needs had been well supported at Ysgol Tremorfa and considered themselves to be active participants in school life. There was widespread perception amongst pupils, who discussed this issue in depth, that individuals experienced disadvantage and disempowerment in their learning for a variety of reasons (e.g. linguistic problems, prolonged absences resulting in substantial amounts of missed work, being placed in inappropriate learning sets and the existence of unaddressed learning difficulties). All pupils agreed that such disempowerment had a serious effect on the development of learning identity and the motivation to learn.

This study has previously alluded to the effects that lessons conducted through the medium of the Welsh language or bilingually have on the learning identities of pupils who were not fluent Welsh speakers. It has also been noted that this process has a direct effect on notions of pupils' disempowerment in specific learning situations. In order to develop successful learning identities, pupils need to feel empowered by their learning communities and any restrictions are perceived to be a disempowerment of that individual. Feelings of disempowerment in pupils are often complex in nature and are frequently accompanied by personal expressions of unfairness, frustration, resentment and anger. These perceptions were clearly reflected in Flame's statement :

... I don't know how I'm going to pass my subjects... I'm not being funny, but I feel kind of angry because it's like they're taking away my future if you get what I mean.

Flame felt disempowered on two counts; not only was she excluded from learning activities because of the linguistic problems she encountered but she also perceived that she lacked the importance to be able to change her situation and so ensure inclusion. Perceptions of personal insignificance and status seemed psychologically to undermine Flame to a greater degree than her practical inability to follow lessons conducted through the medium of the Welsh language. Her sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy were adversely affected and she seemed to have resigned herself to her academic under-achievement. During interview, I sensed a profound weariness as a result of constantly striving to develop a learning identity and to ensure a positive future for herself. She shared both her anger and her sadness at the fact that her educational success, something considered to be her fundamental right, was becoming unattainable. She perceived that the majority of institutional practices at Ysgol Tremorfa, because of the language in which those practices were conducted, were marginalising her and, as a consequence, her participation in the school's learning discourse remained peripheral (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The process of coping with learning difficulties is another means by which pupils may perceive themselves to be both marginalised and disempowered as learners. Such negative experiences and perceptions were shared by Dafydd. During his attendance at primary school, he had become increasingly aware of

the fact that other pupils in his class made better progress with reading than he did and, despite receiving good family support, he lagged behind his peers in this respect. He recalled how one teacher had shown particular sensitivity towards his perceived plight and had invited his parents to school in order to discuss concerns regarding his lack of progress with reading. His parents requested the conducting of a formal assessment and that the school implement a suitable programme to remedy the situation. Although the school were keen to support Dafydd with his problems, during the following two years he perceived a growing gap, in terms of reading ability, between himself and his peers. Dafydd was eventually diagnosed as being dyslexic and a support programme was then implemented.

The difficulties experienced by Dafydd, during what he perceived to be a very long period of time, made him feel so highly emotional regarding his learning that, when encountering new educational tasks, particularly those involving substantial amounts of written material, he felt anxious and predisposed to failure. Despite receiving support both at home and at school, it appeared that the early anxieties regarding his lack of educational progress and delays in diagnosing the nature of his learning difficulties, had instilled within him a low sense of self-efficacy. This he found difficult to overcome. He often perceived himself to be inferior to his classmates and it was clear that his learning experiences were still painful. As he grew older, he learned to avoid full engagement with his work and was seen to withdraw his effort in certain subjects. Despite his problems, he perceived himself to be an intelligent and able pupil (having succeeded in learning to play a number of musical

instruments and passing several music examinations) but became extremely sensitive to the criticism of others, positive or otherwise. Being anxious to avoid further potential failures with his schoolwork, Dafydd consistently found it difficult to motivate himself and, as he approached the time of his GCSE examinations, faced problems completing coursework within the timescale provided.

The degree of marginalisation experienced by both pupils differed significantly as a consequence of both the school's formal practices and informal practices evolving within different peer and friendship groups. Flame, unable to engage fully with bilingual lessons or lessons conducted through the medium of the Welsh language, felt excluded from the formal practices at Ysgol Tremorfa; she also felt alienated from many of her peers because of their linguistic differences (the majority of pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa speak Welsh as their first language and conduct most of their activities through the medium of Welsh). In contrast, Dafydd continued to feel marginalised in lessons due to anxiousness regarding dyslexia. In such circumstances, he often perceived that reading out aloud would draw attention to his problem. However, it seems that he did not feel marginalised in all subjects. Despite these problems, he considered himself a full participant in and member of specific peer and friendship groups, where his learning difficulties seemed to hold little importance to the members.

The experiences of Flame and Dafydd, although differing considerably in nature, both underline the deep and lasting effects that being excluded from participation in learning, both formal and informal, have upon an individual's

identity. Both perceived themselves to be marginalised from the learning process because of the school's practices as an institution - Flame because she was not a fluent Welsh speaker and Dafydd as a result of delays in identifying his dyslexia. Flame's marginalisation was also compounded by her difficulties in integrating fully with her peers' practices. Marginalisation was a deeply disempowering experience for both individuals and each had reacted to perceptions of disempowerment by adopting various self-worth protective strategies. As a result of withdrawing effort from their educational tasks, over time, their expectations of success became considerably diminished.

Families empowering their children

This study has previously explored the effects that family members have on the development of the learning identities of pupils. However this matter is given further consideration in this section by focusing on how families influence a pupil's empowerment as a learner and as a young person. Parents are able to empower or disempower their children through their personal expectations and their response to their children's educational achievements during their school careers. The sense of empowerment felt by an individual pupil directly influences their understanding and perception of their own identity.

Pupils readily shared personal experiences of the support received from family members during their academic careers. Such support included help with schoolwork, the purchasing of books and computer software, discussing problems when feeling overwhelmed by work and 'just being there when I need them'. Each family can be considered, in itself, as a CoP and it is clear that

different practices, values and shared meanings, which evolve within families over time, reflect a unique combination of experiential and aspirational trajectories (Wenger, 1998). Pupils often described the pride felt when successful in their work, not only because of personal achievement and value but also because they felt able to repay their parents, in a meaningful way, for their support over the years. Because of this, pupils perceived themselves as empowered and motivated as learners and were eager to pursue further studies in order to experience the positive emotions associated with successful learning outcomes. All pupils interviewed expressed gratitude that their parents had not placed excessive pressure upon them to succeed and it appeared that the parents held realistic expectations regarding their children's academic potential.

However, several pupils referred to some of their peers whom they felt received a great deal of pressure from their parents to attain academic standards beyond their respective abilities. There was a strong perception that such pressures were grossly unfair to the pupil concerned and had the potential to cause lasting damage to an individual's confidence. Parents should have much more realistic expectations of their children's abilities. Some pupils shared the belief that individual pupils, placed under such pressure by parents, were perfectly entitled to rebel against such unreasonable expectations in order to redress the situation. There was held a general consensus that parents who pressurised their children to succeed did little to enhance their children's sense of self worth. Pupils perceived that any educational successes experienced by pupils in such circumstances were often tainted by the parental expectation to achieve better results in future. Because of this tendency towards dissatisfaction by parents in

pupil achievement, such an outcome was often perceived by pupils to be a form of failure.

By recognising the difficulties some pupils faced, in never being able to satisfy their parents' unrealistic expectations regarding their educational attainment, pupils showed an acute awareness of the Jungian problem :

the greatest burden a child must bear is the unlived life of the parents,

(C.G.Jung, 1875 – 1961)

Pupil disempowerment as a consequence of such parental pressures could be profound. In such cases, natural abilities and educational achievement were often perceived to be under-valued by those individuals closest to the pupils concerned and learning experiences were often directly associated with negative and painful emotions (Seifert, 2004). Facing such difficulties can lead to the production of anxious learners, possessing a low sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem (Seifert, 2004). Motivation is often driven by the need to please a parent rather than by aspirations within their own individual control.

Pupils also perceived a lack of support felt by certain of their peers when parents showed little interest in their children's learning or educational achievements. Leah Jade shared the following insight:

... you know Rhiannon yeah? Well her mother doesn't know that she's doing her GCSEs this year, she's not interested, I don't think she cares really. All she wants is for Rhiannon to leave school and find a job so that she can bring in some money

Pupils who referred to such cases showed a great deal of sympathy towards those who faced such difficulties, sharing that friends would often endeavour to help a pupil in such a situation. Leah Jade explained further:

Rhiannon came to our house, and Keri, and we all helped each other with our coursework, we typed it out on the computer and it looked nice. Rhiannon doesn't have a computer at home so her work was much better after she had typed it out. We were listening to our music at the same time and we finished much quicker than we'd have done by ourselves.

Examples of pupils helping and empowering each other when individuals lacked the support of their families, as seen in Day's (1996) study, were not uncommon but the pupils interviewed also noted that many did not receive such academic support from their friends. It was also accepted that some pupils often declined help and became embarrassed if they thought their friends knew that they lacked the support of their families.

This suggests that the contemporaneous membership of different CoPs may enhance or inhibit the development of an individual's learning identity and his or her participation in the learning process. If the different CoPs of which individual pupils are members (e.g. family, friendship groups and school

community) are all supportive of learning, pupils are able to develop as confident, independent and motivated learners, reflecting Day's (1996) 'learning enhanced' (p. 55) individuals. When one or more of the CoPs (for instance, a pupil's family) are less supportive of a pupil's learning needs, an individual may be seen to receive further support from another community, where new practices are able to develop to support and maintain that pupil's participation. However, this is not always the case and an individual's learning identity can be adversely affected when friendship groups do not harbour positive attitudes towards learning, corresponding with Day's (1996) 'learning obstructed' individuals (p. 54).

Empowerment and motivation.

Throughout this study, pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of relationships within Ysgol Tremorfa and certain factors were considered to be instrumental in the development of the pupils' learning identities, their motivation and their sense of empowerment. Underpinning these relationships were pupils' perceptions regarding notions of respect and fairness. Being treated fairly and with respect by others led to pupils feeling valued as members of their various friendship groups and the wider school community. Perceptions of wellbeing and self-worth were often enhanced and individual or group relationships developed positively over time. In such cases pupils perceived a high degree of control and ownership over their learning and were consequently prepared to make substantial efforts in order to succeed in their tasks. Often feeling empowered as learners, this sense of empowerment

was underlined by the positive relationships they experienced with others, as well as their expectations of successful learning outcomes. For such pupils, empowerment was synonymous with both self-worth maintenance and educational motivation.

In contrast, pupils with a perception of not always being treated fairly or with respect, by either their peers or teachers, often felt lonely, marginalised, and sometimes found participation in learning a difficult experience. They often held low expectations of themselves academically. Such pupils often felt that they had little control over their learning and that the only way to empower themselves, thereby protecting a sense of self worth, was by withdrawing from learning activities. In certain circumstances, such pupils adopted behaviour patterns that they knew to be unacceptable to their teachers and peers. Self-worth protection and empowerment strategies often manifested themselves as a de-motivation to learn. Such pupils recognised that their attitudes were often damaging to themselves and others, yet found it difficult to change their attitudes and behaviour. However, it can be seen that some pupils had succeeded in this process.

The recognition, by pupils, of the importance of relationships at school, also highlights the centrality of the social settings in which such relationships develop. It can be seen that learning also takes place in such social settings. Schools are characterised as complex social settings in which diverse social interactions take place (Wenger, 1998), resulting in the development of individual pupils' learning identities. Pupil motivation should also be

considered as a sociological phenomenon, embedded in the settings in which learning takes place. In the classroom setting, a strong consensus was seen to exist among pupils that good humour, a relaxed atmosphere and well-defined behavioural boundaries were necessary to ensure successful learning outcomes. It was interesting to note that pupils considered the relationships they formed with teachers to be a more important factor in securing effective learning than were the types of learning activities and materials with which they engaged (however, it is important to note the possibility that this may only reflect the values of the participants of this particular research). It would also appear that a hierarchy of relationships is seen to contribute to the development of an individual pupil's learning identity, with family being the most powerful influence, followed by friends and, lastly, teachers.

There was strong evidence presented that pupil empowerment and motivation changed according to their circumstances, which is seen to agree with Dörnyei's (2000) definition of motivation. Pupils readily acknowledged that they worked harder in some subjects than others because they either enjoyed the subject or liked their teacher. Pupils also conceded that their friends at times, influenced their engagement with the learning process; Eleri and Richard both described how the process of changing their friendship groups resulted in significant changes in their motivation and attitude towards school in general. For many pupils, motivation and empowerment were considered to be two different sides of the same coin, where past learning experiences often determined their sense of self-efficacy and self-worth. These feelings, in turn, determined their motivation to engage with the learning process.

Throughout the study, pupils demonstrated an astute awareness of the power aspects associated with their experiences at school and it was clear that perceived states of empowerment directly affected their motivation to learn. There was also recognition of the changing nature of power (Foucault, 1980) within the social interactions at school and within its practices. It appeared that pupils who consistently felt disempowered at school were severely disadvantaged in terms of their motivation to achieve academically. Furthermore, pupils' sense of empowerment reflected their perceptions regarding the various relationships negotiated, both within and without school, and there seemed a general recognition of a hierarchy of influences contributing to an individual's sense of empowerment and their motivation to learn.

Summary of Chapter.

In this chapter, pupils' learning practices and participation have been examined by giving consideration to their effects on the individual's learning identity and sense of empowerment as a learner. Giving consideration to the pupils' membership of various Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998), it was seen that pupils' relationships with their families and friends were significant determinants of their engagement in learning and motivation where learning was seen to be inherently socially embedded. Alignment with particular friendship groups was frequently seen as empowering, where common values relating to trust and respect had been negotiated mutually and over time by group members. These values were manifested in the group's practices and reflected pupils' attitudes towards learning, where members supported each other's learning identities positively or negatively.

Motivation was largely seen to be driven by a learner's understanding of her/his self-worth and protective strategies determined whether or not participation in learning was successful or not. Pupils who engaged in positive self-worth protective strategies were commonly confident learners whose past successful learning experiences drove them to seek further success in their achievements; learning was associated with positive emotions that they were eager to replicate. It was evident that these pupils were supported as learners by their families and friends and learning practices were negotiated to address the developing learning needs of the individual and collective group members. Motivation was seen as a means by which pupils empowered themselves as learners and was

seen to be embedded in the social interactions and participation in which learning took place.

There was evidence that pupils adopted negative self-worth protective strategies for numerous reasons. Such strategies were frequently a consequence of negative emotions associated with learning and commonly resulted in pupils failing to participate fully in learning practices. It was seen that pupils who had experienced family breakdown, bullying at school and past learning difficulties, commonly adopted protective strategies that included withdrawal of effort as a means of avoiding being undermined both as learners and as young people before their peers. It was evident that some friendship groups perpetuated negative attitudes towards learning and their continued self-worth protective strategies were seen further to marginalise these pupils from participation in learning.

Relationships and mutual practices between teachers and pupils were also seen to be significant determinants of pupils' learning identities and motivation to learn. Supportive relationships and practices were seen to sustain pupils' participation in learning and a high degree of motivation and learner empowerment was evident. However, pupils also cited instances of favouritism and unfair treatment by their teachers towards pupils and these were seen to disempower and de-motivate learners. Consideration was given to the effects of teaching practices and their potential to include or exclude pupils from participating in learning; it was seen that pupils who were not fluent Welsh speakers experienced difficulties during some Welsh or bilingual lessons and

considered themselves to be marginalised due to their inability to communicate in Welsh.

Motivation was, therefore, seen as a measure of a pupil's participation in learning practices as well as their empowerment as a learner. Given the centrality of the social interactions within which learning takes place, motivation is thus seen to be inherently socially embedded.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Reflection

The effects of relationships and practices at Ysgol Tremorfa on motivation and learning

During this study, the effects of relationships and the practices in which pupils participated at school were explored in significant depth in order to ascertain how pupils' learning identities evolve over time and to see how this change affects their motivation to achieve academically. The findings discussed in this chapter relate to pupils who participated in the research and do not necessarily reflect the views of all pupils at Ysgol Tremorfa.

Suggestive of Wenger's (1998) descriptions of learning communities, it was clear from early interviews that relationships and practices could not be considered in isolation from each other; relationships gave rise to new practices and practices gave rise to different relationships. Reflecting Berndt & Keefe's (1996) findings, it was seen that some relationships were more influential than others in determining the individual's identity and values and it was clear that every relationship did not exert positive influences on an individual's learning identity. Pupils distinguished between relationships in which they chose to participate and those which they believed to be consequences of attending Ysgol Tremorfa and these need to be considered in terms of the pupils' empowerment as individuals. Furthermore, pupils differentiated between the

school's practices and their own and participation in such practices should also be considered as manifestations of the pupils' sense of empowerment.

Pupils placed great value on forming and keeping relationships with their friends and it was within these social contexts that they were seen to navigate their personal and collective identities over time. Shared experiences strengthened personal allegiances to certain friendship groups and it became evident that these were relationships in which they chose to participate (Jenkins, 1996; Berndt & Keefe, 1996). In general, common values and practices were seen to be reifying characteristics of their friendship groups, in which they felt sufficiently empowered to instigate and adopt new practices in response to the group's perceived collective needs (Wenger, 1998). Practices relating to learning formed only a portion of the group's repertoire of activities but were deeply embedded in the group's collective values and reflected factors such as the group's combined past learning experiences and the attitudes of individuals' families to learning and achievement.

Pupils' interests, goals and aspirations were seen to have changed substantially as they grew older but these changes also reflected similar changes within their friendship groups. Such changes brought about new practices and substantial evidence was found of friends developing new practices to address evolving learning needs, which clearly demonstrated the value attributed to learning by different friendship groups. Several pupils described the support, collaboration and encouragement they had experienced with friends and often believed such characteristics resulted in feelings of enhanced self-esteem, confidence, high

expectations and efficient pursuit of goals, as was characterized by Day's (1996) 'learning enhanced' (p. 55) friendship groups. For this group of pupils, feelings of motivation were seen to engender patterns of effective and successful learning which became empowering experiences. Motivation as a means of empowering the individual should therefore be seen as a phenomenon that is inherently socially embedded and driven by the cumulative social interactions and values experienced by the individual.

Evidence also became apparent that certain friendship groups placed a greater emphasis on those practices that improved individual image and status in the eyes of certain peers than on specific practices that valued learning and achievement. Accounts were given of the ways group members engaged in competitive posturing during lessons, where individuals avoided engagement in learning and rather sought peer approval as a perceived successful outcome. Reflecting Day's (1996) 'learning diminished' groups, pupil concern regarding the way their identities were perceived by their peers was evident among both boys and girls, although the precise manifestation of image and status differed between genders. Individual and collective alignment with other pupils, who were seen to display similar attitudes and experiences was a significant characteristic within such groups whose practices evolved in their pursuit of their chosen social goals (Coleman, 1961) in order to promote the values they considered important. Compelling evidence collected during the study suggested that many of these pupils had encountered difficulty and failure in their past learning experiences, where they had felt both embarrassment and disempowerment in front of their peers. Suggestive of Weiner's (1985) and

Pekrun *et al*'s (2002) observations, powerful emotions, experienced by certain pupils, resulted in continued disaffection with respect to learning, which continued for many years after they first experienced problems. It was also apparent that factors outside the school community were significant determinants of the groups' disaffection towards learning (such factors are discussed in the next section of this chapter) where low expectations and unrealistic goals were seen to be driven by a perceived need to achieve extrinsic achievements as common reifying characteristics.

Seifert's (2004) observations in respect of self-worth protective strategies were seen to be prominent characteristics within the repertoire of practices of disaffected learners' groups and were seen to address both the individuals' frustrated learning attempts and to improve their standing in the context of their peers. Practices manifested themselves in terms of apathy, procrastination, deliberate carelessness in their tasks, truancy, and negative attitudes towards their teachers including visibly ignoring requests to work, sulking, answering back and, at times, responding aggressively towards their teacher. Engaging in such practices was often justified by pupils as being normal behaviour patterns for their group and any deviation from this perceived norm marginalised particular individuals, making them subjects of potential ridicule by their friends and peers. It became clear that any potential gains derived from learning achievements were perceived as inferior to the gains derived from conforming with peers. In such circumstances, pupils considered personal withdrawal and the refusal to engage in learning as a means of self-empowerment, thus protecting and improving their perceived self-esteem and self-worth with

respect to their peers. In this context, motivation could be seen as deliberate non-engagement with learning and thus a manifestation of a pupil's empowerment within a learning situation.

A substantial proportion of pupils described the way their identities had been undermined through being bullied by some of their peers and there was compelling evidence that learning identities had been severely undermined as a consequence. Pupils' responses were largely self-worth protective, although the motives and practices in which bullied pupils engaged with their learning differed significantly from those strategies in which disillusioned pupils were seen to participate. Victims of bullying considered their personal safety of greater importance than either engaging in learning or interacting with peers and their responses ranged from the withdrawal from learning and social interactions (thus minimising the potential of future physical and psychological harm from their bullies) to the apparent immersion in learning and continuation of their social interactions, which indicated to their bullies they were not intimidated by their actions. Corresponding with Weiner's (1985) reflections, the variety of pupils' responses to different situations can suggest that pupils' perception of their power status, within certain settings, varies significantly, as does both the severity and type of bullying endured.

The relationships between pupils and teachers were naturally multifarious, as each pupil had been taught by several different teachers throughout their primary and secondary school years. As noted by Myhill (2002), there was widespread recognition that these relationships had been constructed on pupils'

learning and pastoral needs at specific times, with primary school pupil-teacher relationships frequently similar to those found within families (characterised by their inclusive and nurturing nature) whilst secondary school relationships were often characterised by an increase in pupil independence, whilst retaining an awareness of their teachers' ability to support. It was also recognised that, although teachers were obliged to conduct their relationships within their school's specific academic and pastoral practices, individual teachers were also in a position to interpret how they integrated the school's practices with their own. Pupils considered lessons as locations of both formal and informal practices, where the teacher combined the school's educational duties with various social interactions between pupils and teachers. Examples of good lessons, where pupils' perceptions that the school's formal practices were applied successfully, included those lessons where:

- the subject matter was interesting, relevant, and conveyed clearly and enthusiastically by their teacher
- activities were enjoyable and posed a reasonable challenge to learners
- pupils collaborated in order to negotiate different aspects of their tasks and discussions were encouraged as they interacted with new knowledge
- pupils' behaviour was good and discussion among pupils was allowed
- everyone felt included in the learning discourse

- pupils were able to discuss their work with their teachers and received constructive comments and advice
- the social context was friendly, good humoured and conducive to learning
- mistakes were seen as a natural part of learning and not embarrassing
- pupils received praise from their teacher for effort and their work.

In addition to this, pupils referred to less formal practices, such as extra support and the accessibility of teachers, as factors that substantially affected their learning and sense of wellbeing at school. Such practices were valued by individuals who had experienced prolonged absences from school and pupils who had been victims of bullying by others.

Certain pupils were seen to demonstrate deeper perceptions and understanding of the nature of their relationships with their teachers and such perceptions were seen to have greater nuance, as being more subjective and suggestive of teachers' and pupils' underlying attitudes and values. Intrinsic to many of these perceptions were pupils' beliefs that they had been unfairly treated by a teacher at some point in their academic careers and that such treatment had had a profoundly negative effect upon their motivation to learn. Factors such as being held responsible for the deeds of others, feeling that a teacher did not like them, being compared unfavourably with siblings and not being believed by a teacher

were perceived to be examples of unfair treatment by a teacher. Furthermore, certain pupils referred to cases of perceived favouritism in lessons, resulting in a substantial number of pupils feeling excluded and believing that personal individual effort was inferior to the effort made by those perceived to be teacher's favourites. It should be stressed that pupils did not perceive that all teachers displayed unfairness towards pupils but, when such incidents occurred or were perceived by pupils to have occurred, their effects were often powerful and long lasting.

Reference was also made, by pupils, to the way that some of the school's policies and practices favoured certain pupils, whilst excluding others from full participation in learning. Lessons conducted either bilingually or through the medium of the Welsh language were sometimes perceived as inaccessible to those pupils who did not speak Welsh as a first language and who had not experienced Welsh/bilingual education during their primary school years. It became clear that such pupils perceived themselves as unfairly disadvantaged because of their linguistic identity and that this cultural and linguistic disadvantage had a significantly detrimental effect on their personal learning identities. Pupils described the way that feelings of disempowerment and marginalisation gave rise to withdrawal of effort, defeatism, truancy or the disruption of lessons. There was a clear awareness that their responses were marginalising them even further but they felt helpless and unable to take any substantial degree of control over their own learning.

Being treated unfairly within a social setting in which learning took place was seen to produce an association between learning and specific negative emotions in the mind of a pupil and this concurs with both Weiner's (1985) and Pekrun *et al's* (2002) observations. There was evidence also of pupils responding to their situations by adopting different self-worth protective strategies, such as withdrawal of effort, deliberate underachievement, defeatism, general misbehaviour or hostility towards teachers. In certain cases, pupil adoption of such strategies was directly related to a specific teacher and it was seen that efforts and motivation were transformed for the better within different contexts and in the presence of different teachers. However, in the case of certain pupils, withdrawal from their learning became more extensive, with individuals becoming disillusioned with their situation, and their self-worth protective strategies appeared to alienate them further from their learning experiences. In other such cases, events that had occurred during primary school years were seen to have adversely influenced pupils' learning identities, motivations and experiences several years later. These pupils showed an awareness of the fact that they had become marginalised learners and that self-worth protective strategies had become dominant features of their own learning identities. New practices, developed by pupils in such situations, were seen to be protective of their perceptions of self-worth, as well as being a means of gaining acceptance by some of their peers. However, in such circumstances, it became apparent that their marginalisation as learners became more entrenched as a direct result of their chosen practices.

The importance attributed by pupils to the various social contexts within which they practise their learning activities resonates with Lave & Wenger's (1991) argument for a social theory of learning. Effective learning was commonly seen to occur when social interactions were empowering and supported the development of individuals' positive learning identities and in which an individual's participation, in both formal and informal learning practices, enabled him or her to negotiate meanings within the learning discourse. Failure to engage positively with learning often indicated that individuals considered themselves as being marginalised and disempowered within learning settings. Peripheral participation in learning seldom developed into full participation and their development as learners was significantly inhibited. Within learning contexts, motivation was seen to be a means by which pupils empowered themselves and this was observed clearly when pupils described both positive and negative learning outcomes. Motivation was therefore seen as an empowering force, largely driven by self-worth protective strategies and entirely sociologically embedded.

**The effects of relationships and practices of CoPs outside Ysgol Tremorfa
on motivation and learning**

During the research, it was not surprising to note, as does Jenkins (1996), that the most powerful influence on pupil identity was that of the family and this became evident when studying the life histories of those participating in the study. Pupils demonstrated how their own views and values reflected, in part, those of their family's unique community of practice and this was highly

pertinent in the formation and evolution of the individual's learning identity. Although evidence was also found that pupils were being supported by individuals who were not members of their immediate family, their learning identities were determined, to a large extent, by family aspirations and attitudes towards learning (Jenkins, 1996).

There was compelling evidence that pupils were aware that their families influenced their learning identities both explicitly and implicitly and that the practices in which they participated, both within and without their family community, demonstrated how pupils internalised those values within their own practices. All pupils questioned referred to instances where their parents offered practical assistance and advice when completing particular educational tasks, provided the necessary resources to facilitate learning, supported interests and activities relating to both formal and informal learning and discussed their learning progress. Such support was acknowledged to be of benefit to them as learners. Participation in learning activities within the family was considered as safe and non-threatening - pupils were not worried about revealing any possible deficiencies to their families and they did not consider they would be judged by their families nor regarded as failures should they not succeed in a particular task. Most pupils did not consider that they engaged in self-worth protective strategies within their home settings, although their admission that they sometimes engaged in work-avoidance tactics suggests that different self-worth protective strategies were employed by them.

When pupils referred to family expectations, aspirations and pride for them as learners, they seemed aware and showed a clear understanding of their families' implied values relating to academic achievement and seemed to contextualise their personal goals and ambitions within those shared family values (Jenkins, 1996). Family members were often considered as role models in terms of effort and pursuing goals, although pupils did not always wish to pursue similar academic or career paths to those of their family. In some cases, parents expressed a preference for their children to improve upon their own academic achievements and this was positively accepted as a means of encouragement to succeed, rather than as pressure from parents to perform academically. Pupils considered that these practices were beneficial to their progress as learners and seemed to recognise that individual achievement contributed to their families' future expectations of them. Parents with realistic expectations of their children's achievements were perceived as being supportive and had an empowering and motivating effect on a pupil's learning identity. In contrast, pupils considered that parents who had unrealistic expectations of their children undermined their genuine achievements, engendered resentment and disillusionment and generally disempowered the individual.

As Coleman (1961) noted in his literature, families were also seen to be influential in the pupils' choice of, and participation in, relationships outside the immediate family. Substantial evidence was shown of pupils aligning themselves with other pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds to their own. Friendship groups were often seen as a means of perpetuating the values and practices of members' families, as well as being locations where pupils

were able to express themselves freely while developing personal identities in the context of their peers (Coleman, *ibid.*). Three pupils who participated in the study described how participation in friendship groups whose values and practices differed significantly from those of their respective families made maintaining relationships with their friends a difficult process. Whilst initially perceiving themselves as empowered, having rebelled against their family values, they became aware, in time, that they were being severely disempowered through compromising personal values by continued membership of specific friendship groups. All three pupils perceived their learning identities to be adversely affected by these relationships; however, a change of friendship groups engendered the adoption of different practices and led to a more meaningful participation with learning. In all three cases, pupils considered alignment with their family values was, ultimately, of greater benefit to them, both as young adults and as learners, and each considered themselves, eventually, empowered as a consequence of the decisions they took to change personal and learning trajectories.

Although all pupils considered their families supportive of them as learners, some individuals shared a perception that problems caused by the breakdown of their parents' relationships led to feelings of dejection and vulnerability, both as young adults and as learners. In some cases, experiencing the breakdown of the family unit was a very traumatic and disempowering experience for the pupil concerned and it was readily admitted that such events had challenged an individual's understanding of personal identity. Evidence suggested that certain

pupils continued to experience negative emotions and perceptions of low self-esteem several years after their parents had separated. The emotional responses of pupils to their problems were seen to have profound effects on individual learning identities, where engagement in learning was superseded by the immediacy of addressing specific personal and emotional needs. Pupils appreciated the support they received from friends at such times and they differentiated between the support received from other pupils and adults stating that their close friends showed empathy and did not judge them when they were critical of their parents, whereas they considered adults adopted a more neutral position in respect of their parents. However, in general, their friends' support did not always extend to their academic endeavours and there was evidence of friends supporting pupils in self-worth protective strategies, including truancy from school and withdrawal of effort in lessons. It appears that pupils consider their emotional wellbeing and their learning identities as being incompatible in such cases and the practices adopted suggested that the concept of addressing personal emotional needs superseded personal learning requirements during times of family relationship difficulties. Further research is required in order to determine the extent to which such practices affect academic achievement, to enable schools to provide additional pastoral support to pupils, both as young adults and as young learners.

It is seen that the degrees of empowerment pupils experience as a consequence of their relationships and practices within their families are significant determinants of their empowerment as learners and hence their motivation. Effective practices supporting the individual's learning were seen to have

developed incrementally over time and addressed the pupil's evolving learning requirements as they matured. Families were commonly seen as locations where pupils maintained high levels of self-esteem; however this was not the case when pupils were seen to be experiencing personal difficulties. It can be seen that self-worth protective practices, relating to learning, were not commonly adopted within family settings and evidence showed that protective strategies were often adopted independently of the family unit, when pupils faced personal distress and anxiety within those units. The pivotal role of family in defining an individual's learning identity suggests, as in the case of pupils' friendship groups, that motivation to learn is entirely embedded within the individual's social relationships and therefore reflects their mode and degree of empowerment as learners.

The case for giving pupils a voice

In order to comply with the Education Act 2002, schools have a legal requirement to seek the opinions of children (and other interested parties) as part of the institutional self-evaluation procedures. Consequently, it is believed that schools should see this obligation to evaluate themselves as an opportunity to consult pupils with respect to matters that affect them directly, rather than merely as a legal requirement. The consultation process should be open to all pupils within an educational establishment and the aims and potential outcomes of such discussions made clear at the outset. In order to secure a fuller democratisation of school discourse, pupils should also retain the right to

choose whether or not they wish to participate in any such consultations and should expect their views to be treated with respect and confidence at all times. Furthermore, schools should refrain from consultation processes that exacerbate existing power inequalities between pupils and school management; undertaking perfunctory exercises that are both accommodative and appropriative in nature (Humphries, 1994; Fielding, 2004) could potentially produce information whose validity and integrity is questionable. Any schools seen to contemplate curtailing or coercing particular views, should be encouraged to examine their motives for conducting such exercises; it would be preferable that educational establishments should refrain from completing consultation of any sort in such cases. Identifying reasons for pupils' voices to be listened to is significantly more important than merely exploring the means by which pupils will be given a voice.

This study was premised upon the view that pupils, when consulted, are in a unique position to provide a powerful insight into their schooling and wider experiences and are thus legitimate commentators on the effectiveness of factors influencing their school experiences (see, for example, Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). All pupils interviewed demonstrated a mature understanding of their personal educational experiences and articulated their views clearly at all times. Pupils who might be considered as 'difficult' responded well to being given a voice; they were honest and engaging participants, sharing their aspirations and disappointments openly. Whilst recognising the significant differences that exist between the processes of engaging with pupil voice for the purposes of educational research on the one hand and the satisfaction of a school's

discursive responsibilities on the other, pupil response demonstrated a responsible attitude and a high degree of perspicacity. In such situations, young adults should be valued as gatekeepers of perspectives and ideas not normally accessible to adults.

Engaging with pupil voice should not be considered exclusively as a process that informs school practices and policies; it is also essential that the effects of such a consultation on the individual pupil be taken into account. As this study evolved, pupils expressed the opinion that some of the views shared with the researcher might not have emerged had there not been a requirement to explore specific aspects of personal life histories and learning experiences during interviews. Pupils were clearly proud of the fact they had explored and discussed matters perceived as being of significance and were seen to develop views that were both mature and coherent in nature. Participation in a consultation process has the potential to produce long-term effects on an individual's sense of self-worth and personal aspirations, where such views often influence future decisions. Two pupils (independently of each other) contacted the researcher after having left school to study at a college of further education. With hindsight, both students were able to reflect upon the thoughts and ideas discussed in the study and realised that they had the ability to raise their personal expectations of themselves. What became significant and apparent during later discussions was that they now saw the pursuance of further educational qualifications as a means of self-empowerment and felt considerable confidence in their pursuit. At the time of writing, one pupil had enrolled on a more demanding vocational course with the potential benefit of

providing better employment opportunities upon completion. The second pupil was completing A Levels and was hopeful of gaining entry to study at University. This insight into the long-term development of pupil attainment suggests that longitudinal studies, conducted to determine the degree to which individuals assume different educational aspirations and the ways in which they change long-term goals as a consequence of being consulted as pupils, would be of considerable benefit.

Implications for policy and practice at Ysgol Tremorfa

The compelling insights, communicated by participants of this study, into personal motivation and learning experiences show clearly that the process of engaging with pupil voice has the potential to transform a school's practices and the participation of individuals as learners. Pupils are uniquely located within the educational process to be able to comment on all matters that impinge upon their school experiences and, because of this, their voices should be significant contributors to Ysgol Tremorfa's ongoing discourse relating to learning progress and achievement. Providing pupils with opportunities to influence practices that affect them directly is a significant means of providing empowerment whilst also encouraging deeper participation in the school's endeavours. The process of presenting pupils with ample opportunity to be heard and the fostering of a culture of communication between educational establishments and their members should be commenced at primary school and continued naturally into secondary school years, although it is recognised that

pupils' concerns and values often change and develop as they grow older. Engaging with pupil voice should, therefore, be seen by educational establishments as a fundamental and necessary exercise and as a continuous element of pupil participation within a school's communities and practices.

The pupils who participated in this study clearly demonstrated the importance of the social settings and interactions that contextualise their learning practices and it is essential that this context is fully acknowledged and accommodated within a school's practices. The views pupils shared, that their learning, on occasion, was perceived to be over-focused on curricular content, too mechanical in nature and fundamentally irrelevant to them as individuals, suggested an alienation from both curricular content and the school's learning and teaching practices. These views supported Lave & Wenger's (1991) emphasis upon developing a social theory of learning to replace institutionalised teaching and learning that is 'subsumed within processes of learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p 34). Acknowledging Wenger's (1997) emphasis on learning as an essentially social phenomenon requires the development of practices in which learning is seen as the consequence of engagement in social practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Failure to recognise the importance of collaboration between learners during normal learning discourse may restrict the 'educational resources that could help them (pupils) accomplish particular educational goals' (Epstein 1983, p. 245) and inhibit contextualised learning, which allows pupils to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning outcomes.

The pupils of Ysgol Tremorfa come from a wide range of demographic backgrounds and there was a clear consensus, within the study participants, that not all pupils are equally advantaged. Reference was made to numerous pupils who experience economic disadvantage, lack parental support, have been bullied by peers or have faced problems associated with family breakdown. A number of participants strongly suggested that the school should offer more assistance to disadvantaged pupils than to those who already received sufficient support at home. An examination of Ysgol Tremorfa's 'Equal Opportunities Policy' (EOP) suggests that it is founded upon the flawed assumption that each child attending school is equally advantaged and this is plainly not the case. A school that places children within sets based on academic ability and presents a differentiated curriculum to address the perceived needs of children of varying abilities is clearly contravening its own policy, although this need not always be considered as poor practice. Ysgol Tremorfa should be encouraged to adopt a policy which seeks to secure equality of outcomes for its pupils (see for example, Riddell, 1989) to replace the current EOP, and practices should be developed which provide curricular and pastoral support for pupils who may benefit from positive intervention. Close liaisons already exist between Ysgol Tremorfa and the catchment Primary Schools with respect to the transfer and sharing of information, so identifying those pupils who potentially may not progress from legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in learning should not be problematic. Support programmes should commence early, as a pupil enters Year 7, and could include additional curricular support, mentoring, exploring strategies to improve self-esteem, regular target setting and monitoring, practical support with tasks and regular contact with

parents/guardians. It is recognised that many pupils already benefit from several of these strategies; however, this study's participants considered that such support should be more widely available to pupils of all ages.

The early identification of pupils with learning difficulties should be a priority within both Ysgol Tremorfa and its catchment area Primary Schools. Evidence suggests that delays in diagnosing and implementing support for pupils with conditions such as dyslexia have substantial de-motivating and disempowering effects on the pupil concerned. A pupil who is unable to comprehend why fellow peers achieve progressively more than him or herself, despite a high degree of effort on his or her part, will become significantly undermined, developing negative and painful emotions associated with learning. Prolonged failure, by a school, to identify and address the nature of the learning difficulties experienced by pupils, risks substantial entrenchment of the learner's low self-esteem and disempowerment and the adoption of negative self-worth protective strategies may produce further marginalisation of the pupil concerned.

Substantial evidence emerged, during the research, that bullying amongst pupils was a persistent problem at Ysgol Tremorfa, with eight of the fourteen pupils sharing that they had been victims of bullying at some point in their academic careers. It is acknowledged that the current school anti-bullying policy defines what may constitute bullying and seeks to reduce the number and severity of bullying incidents by placing strong emphasis on identifying bullies. However, the policy fails to define how victims of bullying should be supported by the

school and this should be addressed forthwith. A sensitive, comprehensive and consistent programme of support needs to be adopted in order to minimise the impact of bullying on pupils' emotional and learning wellbeing. Such a programme should aim to ensure the raising of victims' self-esteem and promote strategies that ensure such pupils are less susceptible to bullying in future.

Contribution of study findings to knowledge in field :

This study makes both substantive and methodological contributions to knowledge relating to motivation and studies employing 'voice' and has implications for future research involving both central concepts.

The emphasis placed by pupils on their relationships and social contexts, as determinants of their motivation to learn, reflects the findings of other comparable studies exploring similar phenomena (for example, Berndt & Keefe, 1996; Day, 1996). However, it is important to note that the views examined in this study were the pupils' own, given in their own words and reflecting their contribution to the exploration of that which motivated them to learn. This suggests that, although the study may not be entirely generalizable to other settings, a number of common factors will be recognisable at both Ysgol Tremorfa and other schools. An appreciation of these factors may further improve our understanding of the development of pupils' learning identities and inform future practices and policies that promote meaningful and successful learning strategies.

Acknowledging the central importance of relationships and the social settings in which learning takes place requires the concept of motivation to be considered as a sociological phenomenon, in addition to a psychological characteristic, and this has important consequences in the context of Lave & Wenger's (1991) social theory of learning. At the time the study was conducted, Ysgol Tremorfa was seen not to have adopted such a theoretical stance with respect to its teaching and learning methods. Yet pupils were naturally drawn to learning as 'engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35) and considered their learning experiences more satisfying when they had collaborated with peers while navigating and assimilating meanings as part of formal and informal learning practices.

This study also proposes that motivation should be considered in terms of an individual's sense of empowerment, driven by that learner's individual self-worth protective strategies. Substantial evidence emerged, in this study, of pupils adopting either positive or negative self-worth protective strategies. Pupils assuming positive self-worth protective strategies commonly had positive experiences of learning, normally accompanied by positive emotions; they were confident, flexible and generally independent learners who expected to succeed. Reflecting Seifert's (2004) view of self-worth protective learners, such pupils were seen to participate substantially in the school's learning practices and developed personal practices and strategies in order to pursue both individual and collective goals with friends and peers.

Negative self-worth protective strategies were also evident in this study; these were adopted by pupils who had experienced difficulties in their past learning as well as pupils who had experienced personal difficulties caused by issues such as family breakdown or bullying. The avoidance of full participation in the school's learning practices, by withholding effort, being disruptive in lessons or playing truant, was seen as a manifestation of pupils developing personal practices and strategies that distanced them from their perceived difficulties. In such cases, motivation could be seen in terms of pupils electing not to participate in learning and empowering themselves in order to avoid negative emotions and embarrassment before their peers.

The methodological contribution to knowledge made in this study relates to the manner and utilization of pupil voice. Many studies are seen to endeavour to provide a voice to a group of individuals in order to generate data for subsequent analysis. This data is eventually analysed and interpreted by the researcher, independently of the participants, in a context of ideas and theories argued by other researchers. In this study, as a means of furthering the potency of pupil voice, participants were encouraged to contribute to the evolving study agenda by highlighting matters that they perceived worthy of exploration, both individually and collectively. Additionally, pupils were encouraged to provide their own written introductions, describing how they wished to be portrayed, and to choose their own pseudonym; this was done to avoid any potential misrepresentation of the participants by the researcher.

During the final stages of the study, the research findings were presented to six pupils (the other eight had moved away by this time) for consideration and ratification, ensuring participants were able to confirm satisfaction with the fact that their views were accurately represented by the research. Having considered that such a procedure was good research practice when studying aspects of voice, I was of the opinion that consent provided by the pupils at the outset of the research was not to be considered as being fully informed until the pupils had consented to the manner in which they had been represented in the final written report. Defining the point at which a participant's consent becomes fully informed should be made explicit within the study design and during initial contact between researcher and participant. This has significant implications for future research that engages with 'voice'.

Appendices :

Appendix 1 – Pupil introductions

Appendix 2 – Semi-structured interview questions and prompts

Appendix 3 – Dates of interviews and topics explored

Appendix 4 - Translations of transcripts & pupil introductions

Appendix 5 – Glossary of Welsh terms / place names used in thesis

Appendix 6 – Synopsis of study findings for verification by pupils

Appendix 7 – Copy of consent letter sent to parents / guardian & pupil.

Appendix 1

Pupils introducing themselves.

Order of pupils' introductions :

Colin

Dafydd

Eleri

Eric

Gareth

Hywel

Keri

Leah Jade

Lois

Richard

Sion

Susan

Anna & Flame did not provide introductions.

Colin's Introduction

About me

I have many different interests that I enjoy but most of them involve being outside. Every summer I do my best to go camping at least once a week with my friends. Most people look at camping as if paying to stay on a bit of land with no hot running water, no electricity, gas cookers and food in packets. That is one of the things that really annoy me. When I go camping I love the fact that I really get everything the forest can give. I try and use my time to generally have a good time. My favourite part of camping is on a nice night instead of sleeping in the tent sleeping under the stars and just chatting with my mates without hearing anything that will be anything to do with civilisation and not care in the world. Also I love to go boating with my brother, even though we both get completely soaked from head to toe and we don't even have a proper trailer we still have a laugh.

The most important thing in my life is my family especially my mum, sister, niece and nephews. If anyone says one bad word about them, then they have got me to answer to.

Also my mates are important to me. Every time there's something wrong or one of us is feeling down we always manage to cheer each other up.

To me being successful is very important and I have a back up plan on everything.

When people call me names or try to bring me down it used to work but now I laugh in their face I can't understand why people do that. I mainly pity them that they have nothing to do with their time. When people call me a freak I take it as a compliment I like the fact that I am different from every one else or when they try and insult me by calling me by my surname because it's an unusual name, I take that as a compliment, because they know my name. When I do this it usually makes the person who is trying to insult me quiet and embarrassed and if they are with their friends, it's even funnier so it kind of backfires on them.

When I first began at secondary school I hated it, I thought every one was against me and I had to rebel. As I got older I was doing worse until I saw a tramp on the floor sitting down in the bus stop asking people for cigarettes. I walked right by him and looked until I almost stopped, he then asked me for a cigarette. From that point on I have done my best to avoid being anything like that throughout my life.

One of my passions is cartoons. I love everything to do with them and I know almost every thing to do with them. The other thing I like is cooking. Ever since I can remember I have always loved cooking and wanted to be a chef even though I don't want to still do that it is still an option for me.

This is me pretty much summed up and there's not much more to say.

Dafydd's Introduction.

I'm a 16 year old boy studying for my GCSEs at Ysgol Tremorfa. I live just outside Tremorfa with my mother, father, brother and sister. We're a close family and I'd do anything for my family, especially my younger brother and sister. Although they're younger than me, we've always played together and have enjoyed long summer holidays in each other's company. I enjoy going on holiday and we've been to France, Spain and Italy during the past few years. My favourite holidays were in Spain, I was able to swim in the sea each day and that was brilliant – much better than swimming in a pool.

I have good friends and they're important to me. We like doing the same type of things, like riding our mountain bikes, swimming, playing football and tennis. We're lucky that we enjoy the same kind of things. Also, we enjoy the same type of music – we like Afrobeat, and we like to jam together and try out new songs (I play an electric guitar) – I hope that we'll be able to write enough stuff to form a proper group and play gigs in future. A gang of us went down to 'Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau' (*Dolgellau's Big Session*) last summer and it was brilliant there, lots of great groups, we had a lot of fun there. I hope that we'll be able to go there again this summer after we've finished our GCSEs – it would be a brilliant way to celebrate the end of the exams.

I'm hoping that my GCSE results will be good enough for me to back to the sixth form at school, and after that, I hope to go on to University. I'm not sure what I'd like to study yet, it all depends on my GCSE results, but I'd like to do something involving music.

When I'm at home I'll help out a little bit doing things like washing the car and playing with my brother and sister and take them out on their bikes. Otherwise, I enjoy listening to music, watching some t.v., and playing with my playstation when I'm on my own. Also, I like reading mountain bike magazines but don't enjoy reading anything else.

I think this says everything about me.

Eleri's Introduction.

My name is Eleri and I'm 16 years old. I go to Ysgol Tremorfa and am studying Geography, French, History, Welsh, Sciences, Mathematics and English for my GCSEs. My favourite subject is Geography and I'm hoping to study it to A Level when I get to the sixth form as well as Welsh, Mathematics and English. Then I'm hoping to go to University.

I like to spend my time with my friends and we often go shopping together. I'm very close to my friends and we spend a lot of time talking about what happens at schools as well as outside school. I enjoy cooking, especially cakes and biscuits – I can eat those when I've made them! I also like to use the computer to chat to my friends. I'm quite keen on sports and play in the school netball

team. I really enjoy watching rugby on the television and don't mind watching football either. Last year, I went to Manchester to watch Wales play against New Zealand and I also went to see Manchester United play against Aston Villa recently, I think that watching a live match is really cool.

I've been to many gigs over the past few years, many of them at Neuadd Hafod or the theatre at Llanysaint. I've also been to Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau three times and really enjoy watching Welsh bands performing. Two years ago, I went to the WOMAD festival at Reading with my friend and I was fascinated with all the different kinds of music from different parts of the world. I met a boy called Omar there and he was from Gambia in Africa and he was really interesting to talk to. All his friends called him Kinteh because they thought he looked like Kuntah Kinteh from the television programme. Omar had been staying with his family in London and he comes back to stay with them quite often. I've stayed in touch with Omar and we send emails to each other or chat on MSN. When he's in London, we send text messages to each other.

I really enjoy shopping and usually buy trousers and t-shirts. I often buy Fairtrade clothes and can usually get some nice things in Topshop or New Look. I also like to buy colourful shoes, sometimes with high heels. I went to Manchester a short time ago and bought some red high heeled shoes, two pairs of trousers, four tops and some make up. They were much cheaper to buy at Manchester than they are at Tremorfa.

Eric's Introduction.

I thought I'd write down a few words about me.

I've always been a fair person – I like to be treated fairly and I'll treat everyone else fairly, this is how I was taught from when I was young. It's important to respect people but I also expect to be respected myself. If people don't respect me, then I'll always stand my ground, I don't let people walk all over me. My father taught me to stand up for myself when I was young, although I didn't realise how important that was at the time. People should think what it's like to be treated bad – switch places with the person they're not being respectful to. If people mistreat me, I'll give it back to them ten times worse, this comes from my heart, not something I think about. Then, they might think twice before mistreating someone in future. This is just defending myself, if you're no good at defending yourself, then they'll crack you and you'll be no good to anyone. I know that this might make me sound as if I'm someone who causes trouble, but I'm not like that. I never start any trouble and I don't like people who start trouble.

I like to be happy, just as I like people around me to be happy – my close family and friends are important to me. This comes naturally to me, I just like seeing everyone being happy. I also like to make my family proud of me. If what I'm doing doesn't make my family proud, then it isn't worth doing. When I do something and really put my mind to it, I like to do it well. I'm proud when I've

finished doing something and I've done it well. I know that my family will be proud of me as well and that makes me happy.

I've got a good sense of humour and enjoy making people laugh – my friends especially. I like to catch people out – tease them like, and do things that people don't expect, it makes me feel good when people laugh at something I've said or done. I also enjoy other people being funny, especially when they do something original or unexpected. I think that sharing a joke makes you all feel that you belong to a group of mates.

I like to spend some time with my mates – just playing a bit of football or sometimes rugby. Nothing serious or competitive, just playing to enjoy ourselves, kicking a ball around. I also like to spend time at home. If I've got nothing better to do, I might watch something on TV – I like programmes like Lenny Henry – he's got a good sense of humour, but I'll also watch things like Corrie and Eastenders. I also like to listen to some music – especially hip-hop, that's a bit like rap, but where the words say where you're from, what your feelings are and so on. A bit like I've done here.

Anyway, that's all I have to say for now.

Gareth's Introduction

My name is Gareth and I'm 16 years old. I have two older sisters and I live in Rhydwen near Tremorfa.

I'm a pupil at Ysgol Tremorfa,. I sat my GCSE exams last summer and passed all my subjects, most of them being A grades. I'm now in the sixth form, studying Mathematics, History and Art. I'm also studying towards the Welsh Baccalaureate. I'd like to go to university when I leave school to study architecture. I'm very interested in the design and architecture of buildings. I'd like to visit Italy in future, Venice especially to see the beautiful buildings there.

At weekends and over the holidays, I work at my parents' café in Tremorfa called Y Gegin. I serve customers there and help my father to cook meals.

My interests are playing football and rugby with my friends and I like to go swimming at weekends in the local leisure centre. I also enjoy socializing and take great pleasure in meeting and getting to know different people when I work at my parents' café.

I enjoy travelling and I've already visited a number of foreign countries. I've learnt a lot about the different cultures in these countries and look forward to visiting many more in future.

I'm very fond of music and enjoy listening to my favourite bands, especially Stereophonics. There are many guitars in my home and I intend to learn to play them one day.

Hywel's Introduction.

I am an 18 year old pupil studying the sciences and politics at A Level at Ysgol Tremorfa. After completing my A Levels, I hope to go to University to study Politics and American Studies.

I am a strong believer in social justice and believe that political parties have, especially Labour and Plaid, betrayed their principles in order to be a catch-all party like Labour, or pander to extremists and nationalists like Plaid Cymru. I never knew that prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes were so prevalent amongst pupils at my school. I knew about the teachers already, but I didn't realise what the attitudes of pupils were until I went to the sixth form and the majority of my friends left school to go on apprenticeships, joined the army, started working or went to study at a college of further education.

A specific example of the attitudes I highlighted was when two of my friends were over in my house having a beer watching a game. My friend who was in the sixth form and had hopes of going to university, after light, back-and-forth banter, said to my other friend 'at least I have A-Levels to which my other friend David, who is an apprentice carpet layer, who was recently given his own van and allowed to complete jobs on his own without supervision, over two years prematurely in recognition of his skill and dedication, responded 'I don't want A-Levels mate'. I was more irritated than David and said 'David does not know how many electrons there are in the outer shell of Lithium, but he does not need to know that, do you know at what temperature candine and vinyl be laid down anymore? No, but David does 'cause that's what he needs to know'.

This is just an example of the snobbery and dismissive attitude expressed towards people who take a more 'blue collar' career. Just as the gap between rich and poor has grown substantially over the past 10 years, an attitude gap has also grown, where different classes do not mix together and resent each other.

My biggest regret is choosing Chemistry at A-Level, and my main regrets are academic ones, not studying hard enough for exams and not taking advantage of the modular nature of A-Levels that keep the stress off final exams. I have no regrets regarding my behaviour and attitude in school. The only regret I have in this area is not being more vocal, articulate and mature in raising the issue of elitism and prejudice in school, more so by some teachers than students.

Keri's Introduction.

Hi, my name is Keri and I'm 15 years old, I'll be 16 next May. I live at Tremorfa with my mother and father and we also have a house in Spain where he go on our holidays. Every time we're in Spain, I enjoy myself a lot and I like to spend time with my friend Xavi over there – we go shopping or chill out. Some of Xavi's family live in Barcelona and others work at Menorca. I've got

to know his family in Menorca well and one year, we went to stay at San Milanos Pinguinas in Menorca where they work and we had a really great time.

When I'm at home, I like spending time with my friends and we go shopping and things like that every Saturday. I love all kinds of animals and I like to visit my cousin who lives on a farm and we feed the animals. Sometimes, if her family are away, I'll go there to check and feed the animals myself. I love horses and spend a lot of time looking after them and feeding them. I've also got a dog called Tim and take him for a walk every day.

I like to relax on Sundays and usually spend some time doing yoga.

Leah Jade's Introduction

Hello. My name is Leah Jade. I'm a pupil at Ysgol Tremorfa and I'm in year 11.

I live at Tremorfa with my mother, father, younger sister and older brother and I'm going to have a new little brother in a few weeks, I'm really looking forward to that. I have many friends, and my best friends are Sioned, Catrin, Mari, Ellen and Ffion.

I enjoy sports and play hockey and netball, I'm in the school hockey team and I'm really proud of that. Every weekend, I go to the cinema or shopping with my friends, we have a lot of fun.

I really like coming to school, It's great to see my friends here. I don't get bullied at school so I haven't had to face that problem.

When I leave school next year, I'm hoping to go to Coleg Llanysaint to study hairdressing and I'm hoping to find work as a hairdresser afterwards.

Lois' Introduction

My name is Lois and I'm 16 years old. I was born in June 1991 at Ysbyty'r Sir , Llanysaint. I live at Tremorfa with my parents and younger sister.

I went to Ysgol Gynradd Santes Fair (*primary school*) and am presently a pupil of Ysgol Tremorfa. At present, I'm in the sixth form studying French, Welsh & Geography. Last year, I finished my GCSEs in French, Geography, Welsh, History, Mathematics, Science and English. I passed all my subjects and got 2 A grades.

Every Saturday, I work from 8.30 am to 1.30 pm in a cake shop called Cacennau Cartref in Tremorfa. Usually, after I finish work, I go to Llanysaint or Llanymor to shop.

After school I usually do my homework, listen to my favourite music and watch television. I really enjoy watching soap operas in the evenings or rugby matches over the weekend.

Lately, I've been doing voluntary work in a local charity shop as part of my Baccalaureate. I try to do this every day and usually do an hour each time.

Richard's Introduction

I'm a strong character / personality, who usually likes to take the lead role in team based activities and when around friends. I like to be the centre of attention, I'm quite a loud and talkative person who's fairly confident in most situations. I'm an outgoing person who enjoys doing physical activities and extreme sports, but I also enjoy time alone to relax. I'm a fairly stubborn person and usually think I'm right, but I prefer to work in a team than alone which does get difficult sometimes. I'm happy when out and with friends or doing something new that I enjoy or during the holidays when I can relax and sleep. I get frustrated quite quickly and sometimes find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time if I don't enjoy what I'm doing.

I take education seriously and it's very important to me, I'm also a very motivated person especially if I have put a lot of effort into what I am doing. I work at my best when under a slight amount of pressure, and when I'm succeeding at the task in hand.

I don't like being around arrogant people, although sometimes I would say I am arrogant. My family and friends mean a lot to me and I enjoy being around them and feel at my best when I am. When with friends, I enjoy doing such activities as football, tennis, rugby and various other sports.

Sion's Introduction

I am a very nice person personally but others might think otherwise. I am always up for a laugh and I am an entertaining guy. Also I am a very caring person, I always make sure that people who are close to me like my family and friends are safe and happy. I'm a person that is close to my family especially my younger brother. We get along due to our likeness in hobbies and we are not very different in age.

I have many hobbies to do with sports or without. I enjoy playing football with my friends and I play for my local under-17 team. Also, I enjoy playing in my free time with my friends. Another sport I enjoy playing is rugby. I started playing rugby when I started in year 7 when a teacher told me to come along and lay and since then I've played every year and I am still playing to this day. I currently do not play for a local team but I am thinking of joining the local youth side. In my free time in school, if I don't have any lessons or work, I will go to the gym in the tennis centre, which is only a football pitch away from school. I enjoy keeping healthy because it is what I enjoy doing.

Other hobbies that I have are that I enjoy playing games on the playstation or on my laptop at home. I also like chatting to friends in school, training, or on MSN when I am at home. I also go out – mostly on Saturday nights after I finish work. I hang out with my friends in town and we always enjoy ourselves, and like all normal teenagers, I enjoy my sleep!

That's all I have to offer you about me and my personality and hobbies and I hope you enjoyed it.

Susan's Introduction.

My name is Susan , I'm 17 years old and go to Ysgol Tremorfa. I am studying my A-levels in English and Psychology. Being a sixth form student has changed my life. I have been able to further my learning in subjects that I enjoy, become more confident in myself and I now appreciate friendship much more than I did in year 10 and 11.

When I had my first interview with Mrs Tomos I was in year 11. At that time I was a very shy girl and was intimidated by anyone who spoke out. When I was doing my GCSEs there were a lot of things that I did not understand. Due to this I did not speak out and ask the teachers for help, I thought that if I did then they would tell me off and I would have to do it all by myself. Now though after making friends I have taught myself to speak my mind and I am doing much better at school now.

In the past two years I have changed dramatically. My personality has come out of its shell and I feel great about it. I have so many friends that when I look back to year 11 I feel stupid for always being the quiet one when I could have made great friends like I have now. Coming back to sixth form has changed my life, I still don't know what I want to do at the end of this school year but what I do know is that whatever I do it will be for me and not for someone else.

Appendix 2

Semi-structured questions and prompts for exploration in interviews.

Notes :

(a) Although the topics/questions below have been placed into categories, these are not mutually exclusive; categories have been produced to form a general focus for the interviews.

(b) The topics/questions listed below have been explored with all pupils in the study. They are, however, starting points for discussion following which new categories may be formed reflecting the pupils' responses to these questions. Subsequent interviews have explored themes initiated by the pupils' individual responses.

Issues relating to school

The pupil's feelings in respect of coming to school – what do they enjoy / dislike. Reasons for likes/dislikes.

Differences between primary and secondary schools – which aspects are better / worse (e.g. changing teachers, changing room/environment, different subjects, styles of working, pupils' responsibilities, homework, use of equipment – e.g. computers, sports). Explore their choices and their reasons for them.

The changing roles of pupils in their transition from primary to secondary school – from being the senior pupils in primary school to being the younger pupils in secondary school. How much of an issue was this? How did they feel about starting in secondary school? (e.g. looking forward, feeling nervous, fear of losing their friends, looking forward to making new friends, having to travel greater distances to school)

Pupils' views on the numbers of pupils in classes and how this affects the way in which they work and their motivation to learn. What type of set up do they feel suite them best? Discuss reasons for this.

Pupils' views on setting – is it of help? Is it divisive? Does it motivate pupils or demotivate them? Does it engender competition between pupils? Discuss their reasons.

Lessons

What do pupils believe makes a good lesson?

What makes an interesting / boring lesson? How could thing be changed in their favour?

What types of activities do pupils favour in class (e.g. worksheet, working from text books, computer-based activities, discussion groups, practical work, etc.)

Discuss reasons for their choices. Have their choices always been the same? (e.g. compare year 7 with year 10/11)

What do pupils believe makes a good piece of work?

How valuable do pupils believe homework is? Has this changed (e.g. from KS3 – 4?) Why do pupils believe that homework is set? Do they believe that it is always for a specific purpose? (explore independent learning, support at home etc.)

When a piece of work has been completed successfully, why does the pupil believe this is so? When a piece of work has gone badly, why does the pupils consider that this is so? (explore 'attribution' theories)

How does a pupil feel s/he learns best? What do they find is helpful for their learning? What do they believe hinders their learning? Why are some things more difficult to learn than others?

What motivates a pupil to work harder?

How does a pupil know that they've succeeded in their work?

Pupil/teacher relationships

What do pupils believe their teacher's role is? Explore.

Explore the pupil's changing perception of their teacher's role as they mature.

Does the pupil trust his/her teachers? Explore why, why not, in what way, etc. Does the pupil believe that this is important for his/her learning?

Does the pupil believe that their teachers enjoy teaching her/him? Why /why not? Give examples. Is this important for the pupil's learning?

Do some teachers compare pupils (e.g. with siblings, other pupils) How does the pupil feel about this. Does this have an effect on their motivation?

Explore the pupil's perception of teacher feedback & comments (written and verbal) on pupils' work: extrinsic reward? Useful feedback? Is it motivating? Explore instances such as where the pupil does not believe that their efforts / standard has been fairly recognised by the teacher.

Issues relating to pupils themselves

In which subjects do pupils believe that they succeed / do not succeed? Why is this? Has this changed in the past? Could it change again in future? How? etc.

How much control do pupils believe they have over their own learning? Do they know the direction in which their learning is taking them? Do they believe that

it is important to know this (i.e. explore the contexts of their learning not as a means of passing exams only)

Explore the pupil's perception of ownership of their work & learning; Do they consider that they are encouraged to be independent learners? Explore in depth (how, why, where, by whom, has this always been so, could things be done differently? how, etc.)

Year 11 pupils (following completion of their 'work experience') Do pupils believe that school prepares them adequately for the workplace? Explore (how, why, why not, what would they wish to change, etc.) How useful was the work experience placement in helping pupils decide on a career path? Do pupils feel more motivated and focused after their work experience placement? Explore.

What role do pupils believe that learning (both formal and informal) has in their lifestories up to the present? What about the future? Explore.

What are pupils' feelings about target setting? Do they prefer some types of targets over others (e.g. mastery & ego goals) How does a pupil feel if s/he fails to reach a target? Explore..

Explore pupils' understanding of goals – explore intrinsic and extrinsic aspects (e.g. enjoyment of learning, passing exams, aspirations, etc.)

How would the pupil define 'working hard' Does it change (e.g. different subjects, different times of day, different stages in school (e.g. KS3-4), collaborative work, individual work). For how long can the pupil work hard

How does the pupil define 'ability'. How would the pupil describe her/his ability? Does ability change as the pupil grows older? Can ability vary according to subject or type of task? What does the pupil consider can affect ability?

What does the pupil understand by 'motivation'? What affects their motivation? How motivated do they consider themselves to be? Could that change, if so, in what way(s)?

How does the pupil consider that s/he becomes confident in their school work and learning? Explore examples where the pupil recognised his/her own abilities in a particular field (within or outside school, e.g. sports) Do pupils believe that confidence is related to ability? In what ways? Do pupils consider that feeling confident is necessary for good learning? Explore the relationship between the child's self-esteem and confidence,

What makes a pupil feel comfortable about learning? What makes a pupil feel anxious about learning? Explore the impact that these have on the pupil's learning experiences and potential outcomes.

Discuss how the pupil understands her/himself as a member of : friendship group (inside and outside school), school class group, family member. How

does this influence his/her learning experiences (e.g. explore parental influence and expectations in pupil's learning, parents' own educational experiences, competitiveness amongst peers, alienation from learning & school amongst peers, etc.)

How does the pupil believe that s/he has changed during their time at school – including the transition from primary to secondary school.

If a pupil could re-live his/her time at school would they do anything differently? What, why, what outcomes would be possible, etc.

Appendix 3

Dates of interviews and topics explored.

<u>Anna</u>	<u>23 June 2006</u> (with Susan) Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>19 September 2006</u> (with Susan) Explore pupil's perceptions of herself as a learner in lessons, relationships with teachers
	<u>6 December 2006</u> (with Susan) Explore pupil's views of the role of peer and friendships groups in learning and motivation
	<u>19 May 2007</u> Investigate the effects of factors outside school on her learning identity and motivation
	<u>23 January 2008</u> Investigate the effects of bullying on pupil's learning identity, her aspirations and goals.

Planning notes for 23 January 2008 interview

Backround : I was already aware that pupil had been physically assaulted by her bullies some time ago and she had referred to this in previous interviews. She had also stated that she would be prepared to discuss this when she had had time to make sense of her experiences and agreed to be interviewed at this time. The questions I wished to explore were :

- Can you describe how events that take place outside school affect your learning and motivation to learn?
- In what ways did being bullied affect your school work? Can you describe how you felt about yourself and about your schoolwork when this was taking place?
- Do you think that things could have been differently, for example, by the school? How much support did you receive as an individual and for your work?
- Some xxxx years have now passed since you were bullied, in what way does the experience of being bullied affect how you see yourself as a learner and your motivation now?
- Do you think that being bullied has changed you? as a learner? If so, how.
- What do you feel about your bullies now?

<u>Colin</u>	<u>20 September 2006</u> Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
---------------------	---

<u>10 October 2006</u>	Explore primary school experiences and their effect on his motivation and learning
<u>16 November 2006</u>	Investigate pupil's learning experiences at secondary school and his relationships with his teachers
<u>8 February 2007</u>	Explore the effects of his peers on his motivation to work and how this has changed over time
<u>1 March 2007</u>	Explore the effects of his family and events that took place outside school on his effort and motivation over time
<u>4 May 2007</u>	Colin had indicated in previous interviews that he had changed his attitude to learning substantially as a consequence of seeing a tramp in town. This was explored in depth
<u>11 May 2007</u>	Final interview exploring future goals and aspirations.

Planning notes for 10 October 2006

Background: During his introductory interview, Colin had indicated that he had been very unhappy at primary school and had been bullied there. He had stated that he would be prepared to discuss this in more detail with me in this interview.

- Can you explain why you were unhappy at primary school?
- In what ways did your experiences at primary school affect your motivation to learn - at the time and afterwards when you came to Ysgol Tremorfa?
- How did being bullied affect your attitude towards learning? Does it still affect your learning?
- What effect did not being believed about being bullied have on your school work and your attitude towards learning?
- Can you give examples of how you felt that you were treated less favourably by some of your primary school teachers. How did this affect your learning?

<u>Dafydd</u> <u>20 January 2007</u>	Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
<u>10 March 2007</u>	Exploration of his role as a learner in his lessons as well as the difficulties he experienced prior to being diagnosed as dyslexic. His coping

strategies over time were investigated.

<u>28 April 2007</u>	An exploration of his relationships with his teachers, their support and how these had contributed to how he perceived his learning identity
<u>11 May 2007</u>	Explore the effects of his peers on his effort and motivation, how his varying levels of motivation were played out in different lessons
<u>16 September 2007</u>	The role of his family in determining how motivated he was to learn and achieve were explored as well as his future goals.

Planning notes for 10 March 2007 interview.

Background: During his introductory interview, Dafydd had referred to a difficult period during his primary school years prior to being diagnosed as dyslexic.

- Can you describe why you thought that you were falling behind with your work at primary school?
- How did you feel when this took place?
- In what way did this affect your learning?
- What support did you have at this time? What support did you have after being diagnosed as being dyslexic?
- Could things have been differently at the time? If so, what and how?
- In what ways does being dyslexic affect your motivation to learn and your understanding of yourself as a learner?

<u>Eleri</u>	<u>8 September 2006</u>	Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>18 September 2006</u>	Explore her perception of herself as a learner in lessons, her preferred modes of learning
	<u>15 November 2006</u>	Investigate her relationships with her teachers in two different schools and how this affected her learning identity
	<u>25 January 2007</u>	Explore how some of her peer relationships had affected her attitude towards learning, the impact on her of her friends becoming her bullies and her eventual move to another school
	<u>10 March 2007</u>	Interview explored the effects of her family on her motivation and effort at school, the

		important role that her family played when she resumed a positive learning identity
	<u>15 June 2007</u>	Reflect over her trajectory as a learner over time, her future goals in light of her feeling of empowerment as a learner.
<u>Eric</u>	<u>18 January 2006</u>	Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>28 February 2006</u>	The effects of his primary school experiences and earlier personal difficulties on his motivation to learn
	<u>5 May 2006</u>	Explore his experiences in his lessons and his relationships with his teachers
	<u>21 June 2006</u>	Investigate the effects that family and events that take place outside school have had upon his effort and motivation
	<u>22 May 2007</u> (at Eric's home)	Reflect over the year since he left school, how he now perceived his learning identity whilst at school and afterwards. His goals and aspirations for the future were also explored.
<u>Flame</u>	<u>29 March 2007</u>	Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>14 April 2007</u>	Explore how family problems and moving homes influenced her learning identity and motivation to achieve. Also explore how changing schools affected her achievements and expectations in particular changing from an English speaking school to a predominantly Welsh speaking school.
	<u>28 April 2007</u>	Continuation of interview of 14 April by exploring her feelings of alienation in her current school and how this influenced her preparations for her forthcoming GCSE examinations. Investigate how she had changed from being a confident and enthusiastic learner to her current position of feeling alienated at school and disempowered as a learner.

I intended to interview Flame after her GCSE examinations but she had moved away and left no contact details at her previous address.

Gareth 20 September 2006 (with Sion) Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews

3 October 2006 (with Sion) Explore his learning experiences in class and his relationships with his teachers

10 October 2006 (with Sion) Explore the effects of his peers and friends on his learning identity and motivation

3 February 2007 Investigate the role of his family in the development of his learning identity. Also explore how events outside school affect his motivation to learn

27 April 2007 Reflect over how he'd developed his learning identity over time and explore his future goals.

Hywel 24 November 2005 Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews

11 January 2006 Explore pupil's experiences during primary school and their effects on his present attitude to learning

8 February 2006 Explore pupil's learning experiences during secondary school, what features does he consider to help his learning, what features impede his learning

14 June 2006 Investigate pupil's views of favouritism shown by some of his teachers towards some pupils. Also explore how his perception of some teachers' prejudice towards some pupils affects motivation and learning

29 June 2006 Explore pupil's views of the role of peers and friends in determining how he learns and his motivation to achieve

12 October 2006 Explore the pupil's views of the role of family in determining his motivation and achievements

25 January 2007 Reflect on how his views have developed over

the period of interviewing, how would he now define himself as a learner, has this changed? If so, why? Also discuss his future goals and aspirations.

Planning notes for 14 June 2006 interview

Background : During his previous interviews, Hywel had commented on displays of favouritism and bias by some teachers. This interview explored his views in more depth and he was invited to give pseudonyms to particular teachers and pupils which he did in most cases. He understood that I was not going to intervene in any teacher-pupil relationship unless he suggested that he, or any other pupil, might be in a position of potential harm, there was no suggestion of this during the interview.

- In what ways have you seen some teachers treating some pupils different to other pupils? Can you give examples?
- Why do you think some teachers treat some pupils differently to others?
- Have you experienced what you consider to be more / less favourable treatment from some teachers? Can you give examples?
- How do you feel if you are treated differently to other pupils? What effect does this have on your attitude towards learning?
- Have you discussed favouritism / bias with any of your peers? What effect does it have on attitudes towards learning and motivation?
- In what ways do you think that displays of favouritism / prejudice on the part of teachers might influence achievement and motivation in the long term? How might it affect you?

Keri 4 October 2006 (with Leah Jade) Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews

8 February 2007 (with Leah Jade) Explore pupil's views of her classroom experiences, many of which were in low sets with some disruptive pupils, also explore the effects of her relationships with her teachers on her motivation

17 January 2008 (with Leah Jade) Explore the effects of her peers and friends on her motivation to learn

31 January 2008 Explore how her family and events outside school influence her motivation to learn. Also discuss her future goals and aspirations.

Leah Jade 4 October 2006 (with Keri) Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews

	<u>8 February 2007</u> (with Keri)	Explore pupil's views of her classroom experiences, many of which were in low sets with some disruptive pupils, also explore the effects of her relationships with her teachers on her motivation
	<u>17 January 2008</u> (with Keri)	Explore the effects of her peers and friends on her motivation to learn
	<u>28 January 2008</u>	Explore how her family and events outside school influence her motivation to learn. Investigate how her experiences of being bullied affected her current learning identity. Also discuss her future goals and aspirations.
<u>Lois</u>	<u>17 January 2006</u>	Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>2 May 2006</u>	Explore pupil's classroom experiences and relationships with her teachers affect her motivation and learning
	<u>27 June 2006</u>	Focus on pupil's response to different classroom settings and activities - she had highlighted in previous interview that she found it difficult to concentrate when her peers were noisy
	<u>19 September 2006</u>	Explore how peers and friends influence her learning and motivation
	<u>10 October 2006</u>	Explore how experience of being bullied has affected her learning identity and overall motivation
	<u>7 November 2006</u>	Explore how prolonged periods of illness have affected her learning identity and achievement
	<u>8 March 2007</u>	Investigate how her family affect her motivation to learn
	<u>11 October 2007</u>	Overview of her past interviews, her learning trajectory to date and her aspirations and goals for the future.
<u>Richard</u>	<u>15 November 2007</u>	Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews

	<u>4 December 2007</u>	Explore classroom experiences and relationships with his teachers, with particular focus on how he changed his attitudes towards schoolwork over time
	<u>13 December 2007</u>	Investigate how he changed friendship groups and how he perceived these changes to have influenced his motivation to learn. Discuss the importance of peers and friends in his learning identity and motivation
	<u>19 December 2007</u>	Explore how his family influence his motivation, achievements, aspirations and goals. Reflect over how his learning trajectory might have been different had he not changed friendship groups in Year 9.
<u>Sion</u>	<u>20 September 2006</u>	(with Gareth) Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>3 October 2006</u>	(with Gareth) Explore his learning experiences in class and his relationships with his teachers
	<u>10 October 2006</u>	(with Gareth) Explore the effects of his peers and friends on his learning identity and motivation
	<u>17 March 2007</u>	Investigate how his family influenced the development of his learning identity
	<u>7 December 2007</u>	Explore his aspirations and goals for the future, also reflect over how he'd developed as a learner since he commenced his A Level studies.
<u>Susan</u>	<u>23 June 2006</u>	(with Anna) Introductory interview, explore pupil's views about school, identify matters to discuss in future interviews
	<u>19 September 2006</u>	(with Anna) Explore pupil's perceptions of herself as a learner in lessons, relationships with teachers
	<u>6 December 2006</u>	(with Anna) Explore pupil's views of the role of peer and friendships groups learning and motivation
	<u>20 April 2007</u>	The effects of family and events that take place

outside school were discussed to determine their effects on her motivation

10 December 2007

Susan had indicated that she had changed her attitude to learning substantially during year 12 and this was explored as well as her future goals.

Appendix 4

Verification of Translations from Welsh into English

This section includes samples of the Welsh – English translations of pupil interviews as well as excerpts from Welsh interviews that are included in the thesis. The verification was carried out by Dr Sylvia P. Jones, Head of Translation Unit, Canolfan Bedwyr, University of Wales, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2PX and the translations were confirmed as correct (subject to the minor amendments detailed below) in an email dated 20 November 2008.

The verification process was carried out as follows. Two pupil introductions and six interview excerpts quoted in the thesis were sent in their original Welsh form as well as my English translations to Dr Jones. She indicated that she was satisfied that the translations retained their original meaning but she did suggest some minor amendments to the translations which I have included below and in the thesis itself. The amendments are underlined with words deleted by Dr Jones being struck through and words inserted by her underlined.

Eleri's introduction (original).

Cyflwyniad Eleri

Fy enw yw Eleri ac dwi'n 16 oed. Dwi'n mynd i Ysgol Tremorfa ac dwi'n astudio ar gyfer TGAU Daearyddiaeth, Ffrangeg, Hanes, Cymraeg, Gwyddoniaeth, Mathemateg a Saesneg. Fy hoff bwnc yw Daearyddiaeth a dwi'n gobeithio ei astudio ar gyfer lefel A pan af i'r chweched dosbarth yn ogystal â Chymraeg, Mathemateg a Saesneg. Wedyn dwi'n gobeithio myndi'r Brifysgol.

Dwi'n hoffi treulio amser hefo'm ffrindiau ac yn aml mi wnawn ni fynd i siopa hefo'n gilydd. Dwi'n agos iawn at fy ffrindiau ac mi rydan ni'n treulio llawer o amser yn trafod beth sy'n digwydd yn yr ysgol a thu allan i'r ysgol hefyd. Dwi'n mwynhau coginio, yn arbennig cacennau a bisgedi – dwi'n gallu eu bwyta yn syth ar ôl eu gwneud! Dwi hefyd yn mwynhau defnyddio'r cyfrifiadur i sgwrsio hefo'm ffrindiau. Dwi'n hoff iawn o chwaraeon ac dwi'n chwarae yn nhîm pel rwyd yr ysgol. Dwi'n mwynhau gwylio rygbi ar y teledu yn arw a dwi'm yn meindio pel droed ychwaith. Llynedd, mi es i i Manceinion i wyl Cymru yn chwarae yn erbyn Seland Newydd ac mi welais i Manchester United yn chwarae yn erbyn Aston Villa yn ddiweddar, dwi'n meddwl fod gwylio gêm fyw yn 'cwl'.

Dwi wedi bod mewn llawer o gigs dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf, llawer ohonynt yn Neuadd Hafod neu'r theatr yn Llanysaint. Dwi hefyd wedi bod yn Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau deirgwaith a dwi'n mwynhau gweld grwpiau Cymraeg yn perfformio. Dwy flynedd yn ôl mi ês i wyl WOMAD yn Reading hefo fy ffrind ac mi roeddwn wrth fy modd hefo gwahanol fathau o gerddoriaeth o bob rhan o'r byd. Mi wnes i gyfarfod bachgen o'r enw Omar yno ac mi roedd o'n dod o Gambia yn Affrica ac mi roedd o'n ddiddorol iawn i siarad hefo fo. Roed ei ffrindiau i gyd yn ei alw'n Kinteh am eu bod yn meddwl ei fod yn edrych fel

Kuntah Kinteh o'r rhaglen deledu. Roed Omar wedi bod yn aros hefo'i deulu yn Llundain ac mae o'n dod yn ôl i aros hefo nhw'n reit aml Dwi wedi cadw mewn cysylltiad hefo Omar ac mi dan ni'n anfon ebost at ein gilydd neu yn sgwrsio ar MSN. Pan mae o'n Llundain, dan ni'n anfon negeseuon testun at ein gilydd.

Dwi'n mwynhau siopa yn fawr ac fel rheol byddaf yn prynu jeans a chrysau T. Dwi'n prynu dillad Masnach Têg yn aml a gallaf gael pethau neis yn Topshop neu New Look fel arfer. Dwi'n hoffi prynu esgidiau lliwgar, weithiau hefo sodlau uchel. Mi ês i Fanceinion ychydig yn ôl ac mi brynais i sgidiau coch hefo sodlau uchel, dau bâr o drowsus, pedwar top a cholur. Mi roeddau nhw'n llawer rhatach i'w prynu yn Manceinion nag yn Nhremorfa.

Eleri's Introduction (DWT / SPJ).

My name is Eleri and I'm 16 years old. I go to Ysgol Tremorfa and am studying Geography, French, History, Welsh, Sciences, ~~Mathematics~~ and English for my GCSEs. My favourite subject is Geography and I'm hoping to study it to A Level when I get to the sixth form as well as Welsh, ~~Mathematics~~ and English. Then I'm hoping to go to University.

I like to spend my time with my friends and we often go shopping together. I'm very close to my friends and we spend a lot of time talking about what happens at school as well as outside school. I enjoy cooking, especially cakes and biscuits – I can eat those ~~one~~ as soon as I've made them! I also like to use the computer to chat to my friends. I'm quite keen on sports and play in the school netball team. I really enjoy watching rugby on the television and ~~don't mind~~ I quite like watching football ~~either~~ too. Last year, I went to Manchester to watch Wales play against New Zealand and I also went to see Manchester United play against Aston Villa recently, I think that watching a live match is really cool.

I've been to many gigs over the past few years, many of them at Neuadd Hafod or the theatre at Llanysaint. I've also been to Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau three times and I really enjoy watching Welsh bands performing. Two years ago, I went to the WOMAD festival in Reading with my friend and I was fascinated with all the different kinds of music from different parts of the world. I met a boy called Omar there and he was from Gambia in Africa and he was really interesting to talk to. All his friends called him Kinteh because they thought he looked like Kuntah Kinteh from the television programme. Omar had been staying with his family in London and he comes back to stay with them quite often. I've stayed in touch with Omar and we send emails to each other or chat on MSN. When he's in London, we send text messages to each other.

I really enjoy shopping and I usually buy trousers and t-shirts. I often buy Fairtrade clothes and I can usually get some nice things in Topshop or New Look. I also like to buy colourful shoes, sometimes with high heels. I went to Manchester a short time ago and bought some red high heeled shoes, two pairs of trousers, four tops and some make up. They were much cheaper to buy at Manchester than they are at Tremorfa.

Dafydd's Introduction (original)

Cyflwyniad Dafydd :

Rwy'n fachgen 16 oed yn astudio ar gyfer fy TGAU yn Ysgol Tremorfa. Dwi'n byw jyst tu allan i Tremorfa gyda mam, dad a'm brawd a chwaer. Mi dan ni'n deulu agos ac mi fyswn i'n gwneud rhywbeth i'm teulu, yn enwedig fy mrawd a chwaer fach. Er 'i bod nhw'n fengach na fi, mi dan ni wedi chwarae hefo'n gilydd erioed ac yn mwynhau gwyliau haf hir yng nghwmni ein gilydd. Dwi'n mwynhau mynd ar fy ngwyliau ac dwi wedi bod yn Ffrainc, Sbaen a'r Eidal y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Mi roedd fy hoff wyliau yn Sbaen, mi ro'n i'n nofio yn y môr bob dydd ac roedd hynna'n wych – gwell o lawer na nofio mewn pwll nofio.

Mae gynnai ffrindiau da ac mae nhw'n bwysig iawn i mi. Dan ni i gyd yn lecio gwneud yr un pethau, fel reidio beiciau mynydd, nofio, chwarae pêl droed a tennis. Dan ni'n lwcus bod ni'n lecio'r un pethau. Hefyd dan ni'n lecio'r un math o gerddoriaeth – dan ni'n lecio Afrobeat ac dan ni'n lecio jamio hefo'n gilydd a rhoi cynnig ar ganeuon newydd (dwi'n chwarae gitar drydan) – dwi'n gobeithio gwnawn ni sgrifennu digon o stwff i ffurfio grwp go iawn a chwarae mewn gigs yn y dyfodol. Mi aeth criw ohonom ni i lawr i Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau haf diwethaf ac mi roedd hi'n wych yno, lot o grwpiau, ac mi gawson ni lot o hwyl. Dwi'n gobeithio y byddan ni'n gallu mynd yno eto haf yma ar ôl TGAU – mi fyddai'n ffordd wych i ddathlu gorffen ein arholiadau.

Dwi'n gobeithio bydd canlyniadau fy TGAU yn ddigon da i mi gael mynd yn ôl i'r chweched dosbarth ac wedi hynny dwi'n gobeithio mynd ymlaen i'r Brifysgol. Dwi'm yn siwr be fyddai ishio'i astudio eto, mae'n dibynnu ar fy nghanlyniadau TGAU, ond mi fyswn i'n lecio gwneud rhywbeth hefo cerddoriaeth.

Pan dwi adref, mi wnai helpu allan ychydig, gwneud pethau fel golchi'r car a chwarae hefo'm brawd a chwaer a mynd a nhw allan hefo'u beiciau. Fel arall, dwi'n mwynhau gwrando ar gerddoriaeth a gwyllo chydig o deledu a chwarae hefo Playstation pan dwi ar ben fy hun. Hefyd, dwi'n mwynhau darllen cylchgronau am reidio beiciau mynydd ond dwi'm yn mwynhau darllen fawr ddim byd arall.

Dwi'n meddwl bod hyn yn dweud bob dim amdana i.

Dafydd's Introduction (DWT / SPJ).

I'm a 16 year old boy studying for my GCSEs at Ysgol Tremorfa. I live just outside Tremorfa with my mother, father, brother and sister. We're a close family and I'd do anything for my family, especially my younger brother and sister. Although they're younger than me, we've always played together and have enjoyed long summer holidays in each other's company. I enjoy going on holiday and we've been to France, Spain and Italy during the past few years.

My favourite holidays were in Spain, I was able to swim in the sea each day and that was brilliant – much better than swimming in a pool.

I have good friends and they're important to me. We like doing the same type of things, like riding our mountain bikes, swimming, playing football and tennis. We're lucky that we enjoy the same kind of things. Also, we enjoy the same type of music – we like Afrobeat, and we like to jam together and try out new songs (I play an electric guitar) – I hope that we'll be able to write enough stuff to form a proper group and play gigs in future. A gang of us went down to 'Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau' (*Dolgellau's Big Session*) last summer and it was brilliant there, lots of ~~great~~ groups, we had a lot of fun there. I hope that we'll be able to go there again this summer after we've finished our GCSEs – it would be a brilliant way to celebrate the end of the exams.

I'm hoping that my GCSE results will be good enough for me to back to the sixth form at school, and after that, I hope to go on to University. I'm not sure what I'd like to study yet, it all depends on my GCSE results, but I'd like to do something involving music.

When I'm at home I'll help out a little bit doing things like washing the car and playing with my brother and sister and ~~take~~ taking them out on their bikes. Otherwise, I enjoy listening to music, watching some t.v., and playing with my Playstation when I'm on my own. Also, I like reading mountain bike magazines but don't enjoy reading anything else really.

I think this says everything about me.

Excerpts from interview transcripts :

Excerpt 1 (original) :

Mae Tony yn ben bach ers iddo gael ei roi yn y setiau uchaf, roedd o'n iawn o'r blaen ond rwan, mae o'n meddwl i fod o'n well na fi ... dwi'm yn meddwl fod gynnon nhw (disgyblion eraill) broblem hefo setio, ond dwi'n meddwl fod gynno nhw broblem hefo be mae setio yn 'i wneud i bobol. Ac mae nhw'n 'risentio' – dim y ffaith fod disgyblion eraill hefo mwy o allu na nhw, ond y ffaith bod nhw'n sbio i lawr arnyn nhw ac yn meddwl 'i bod nhw'n well na nhw

Translation of excerpt 1 (DWT / SPJ)

Tony's become bigheaded since he's been put in the top sets, he was alright before, but he thinks that he's better than me now ... I don't think they (other pupils) have a problem with setting, but I do think they have a problem with what setting does to people. And they resent it – not the fact that other pupils are more able than them, but the fact that they look down on them and think that they're better than them"

Excerpt 2 (original) :

Mae 'nhad wedi 'encouragio' fi i wneud yn dda yn ysgol ac mae o wedi'm helpu i lot hefo'm gwaith. Dwi ishio'i wneud o'n falch ohonai, i roi rhywbeth yn ôl iddo fo am yr holl flynyddoedd mae o wedi 'i roi i fi ia.

Translation of excerpt 2 (DWT / SPJ)

My father has always encouraged me to do well at school and he's helped me a lot with my work. I want to make him proud yeah, to give him something back for all the years he's give me yeah".

Excerpt 3 (original) :

... fel mod i'n cael gwell cyfle na nhw i gael job dda. Mae mam yn gweithio fel 'legal secretary' ac mae hi'n tynnu' nghoes i weithiau yn dweud wrthai y dyliwn i anelu am gyflog uchel a gwneud cyn lleied a phosib amdano fo fath rhei o'i bosus. Mae fi yn mynd i'r Brifysgol yn bwysig iawn iddyn nhw.

Translation of excerpt 3 (DWT / SPJ)

... so that I can have a better chance than they did to have get a good job. My mother works as a legal secretary and she sometimes pulls my leg telling me that I should aim for a high salary and do as little as possible for it like some of her bosses! My going to university is very important to them.

Excerpt 4 (original) :

Mae'n dibynnu i ba raddau mae nhw (rhieni) ishio iddyn nhw lwyddo ... Os ydyn nhw'n jyst dweud 'gwna dy orau' yna mae hynna'n iawn ond weithiau mi dach chi'n gweld rhieni 'pushy' yn rhoi'i plant saith oed ar y llwyfan I ganu a phetha felly ... a pan dach chi'n mynd a hynna i'r eithaf, mi all o greu 'resentent' ... ac ella neith o ddim cael y 'desired effect', ac ella bysa rhai pobol yn troi rownd a deud 'dach chi'n gwbod be, dwi'm ishio gwneud hyn, dach chi'n trio byw y'ch bywyd trwydda i.

Translation of excerpt 4 (DWT/ SPJ)

It depends to what degree they (*the parents*) want them to succeed. ... If they just say 'do your best' then that's all right, but sometimes you see pushy parents putting their seven year olds on stage to sing and things like that ... and taken to the extreme if you take that too far, it might cause some resentment... and it might not have the desired effect, and some people might turn round and say 'you know what, I don't want to do this, you're trying to live your life through me'

Excerpt 5 (original) :

... mi wnaeth y'n rhieni wahanu yn ystod y'n TGAU – pan o'n i'n blwyddyn 10, felly mi gafodd hynny andros o effaith ar yng ngwaith ysgol, wnesh i jyst –

wnesh i jyst colli diddordab ‘really’, mi wnesh i stopio dwad i’r ysgol, stopio gweithio, doedd o ddim yn edrach yn bwysig i mi adeg yna, ac mae o’n dal i ‘ffeithio arnai rwan, ond llai na’r adeg hynny.”

Translation of excerpt 5 (DWT / SPJ)

.. my parents split up during my GCSEs – when I was in year 10, so that had a really big effect on my schoolwork, I just – I just lost interest really, basically, I stopped coming to school, stopped working, it didn’t seem important to me then, and it still affects me now, but less than it did at the time.

Excerpt 6 (original) :

Dwi’n teimlo sori drostyn nhw achos dwi wedi arfar cael cefnogaeth gynno mam a dad a phobol eraill, ond mae na rai disgyblion sydd ddim yn cael yr un cyfleoedd, ella bod ‘i rhieni nhw ddim yn poeni gymaint amdanyn nhw ac wedyn mae hyna’n cael ei bashio i lawr i’r plant dwi’n meddwl a dy’n nhw’m yn poeni sut mae nhw’n gwneud ... Dwi’n siwr os byddan nhw ishio gwneud yn dda, dwi’n siwr bod nhw’n meddwl ‘O, dwi’n gobeithio eith bob dim yn iawn, ond mi fyswn i’n lecio os bysa mam neu dad yn helpu fi mwy na mae nhw.’ Dwi’n gwbod bod rhei ishio gwneud yn dda a mynd ymlaen i coleg neu i gael job dda ond dach chi’n gwbod cystal a fi nad ydi pethau’n hawdd os dach chi ddim yn cael cefnogaeth”.

Translation of excerpt 6 (DWT / SPJ)

I feel sorry for them really because I’m used to having support from my mum and dad and other people, but some pupils don’t have the same opportunities, maybe their parents don’t worry care as much about them and then that is passed down to the children I think and then they don’t worry care about how they do ... I’m sure that if they really want to do well, I’m sure that they think ‘Oh, I hope everything goes alright, but I wish that mum or dad would help me more than they do’. I know that some want to do well and to go on to college or to get a good job but you know as well as I do that things aren’t that straightforward simple if you don’t have the support”.

Appendix 5

Glossary of terms / place names

Coleg Llanysaint = Llanysaint College of Further Education

craic = fun, enjoyment, jokes, news and gossip amongst a group of individuals (from Irish English)

Eisteddfodau = plural of Eisteddfod, Welsh cultural event where competitions are held in the performing arts, literature and fine art.

Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau = Welsh Cultural Festival held annually at Dolgellau where folk music from Wales and other Celtic countries is performed.

Stâd yr Ynys = Ynys Estate (social housing estate)

Trem y Mynydd = Mountain View (private housing estate)

Yr Urdd = nationwide society for young Welsh people which promotes cultural and sporting activities through the medium of the Welsh language. A national eisteddfod is held annually where young people take part in various cultural and literary competitions.

Ysgol Tremorfa = Tremorfa (Secondary) School

Appendix 6

Synopsis of study findings for verification by pupils

Pupils were provided with the following list of findings which were not placed in any particular order. They were requested to indicate how strongly they felt each statement represented their own views by placing numbers ranging from '1' (agree strongly) to '3' (disagree strongly) next to each statement. They were also requested to give an overall mark (ranging from 1 to 10) to indicate how well their views had been represented by the complete findings. Should the pupils not have a view on a particular statement, they were requested to leave it blank. Although numbers were used, this should not be seen as an exercise in quantifying pupils' agreement.

Six pupils took part in this exercise which was seen as a means of involving pupil voice in the final analytical stage of the study.

The mean score is provided in brackets after each statement, and the statements have been ranked to indicate pupils' collective agreement.

The social interactions that take place at school are recognised as very important by most pupils; time spent with their friends was one of the most enjoyable aspects of school life. (1.0)

The social setting of the classroom is important to pupils and pupils feel that this is an important factor in determining how well they learn and enjoy learning. (1.0)

Pupils who have been badly bullied feel very vulnerable at school and feel unsafe to go to some parts of school by themselves. (1.0)

Friends can be supportive of each other, helping with school work, discussing emotional or family problems, and these experiences were considered to be valuable by pupils. (1.0)

The school's practices tends to favour some pupils more than others, for example, pupils who come from supportive, middle-class homes tend to fit into the school's practices better than children who may come from more disadvantaged homes. (1.0)

Pupils feel motivated when they feel confident about their work and have experienced success in that subject. (1.0)

Teachers who display favouritism towards some pupils are doing other pupils a disservice by treating them less well, this can be a very demotivating experience for pupils who are not 'the favourites' (1.0)

Pupils tend to enjoy subjects where they feel that they are successful learners and when they have good relationships with their teachers. Conversely, pupils

tend to dislike subjects where they feel that they have problems with the work and when they don't feel that they get on well with their teachers. (1.0)

Pupils felt that they were able to show their gratitude for their parents' support by working hard and making them proud of their achievements. (1.0)

Pupils feel that when pupils who are normally disruptive are rewarded by being allowed to go on trips, this undermines the majority of pupils who are normally well behaved and are not rewarded for this. (1.0)

Many pupils saw a clear relationship between effort and academic achievement, with effort being considered more important than 'ability' in ensuring success. (1.0)

Pupils felt that the support for their school work that they received from their families was very important and they attributed their successes to this support. (1.0)

The amount of noise in classrooms has an effect on how pupils achieve in their schoolwork. (1.25)

Pupils do not feel that their voice is sought nor heard at school. Many feel that this disempowers them from being active participants in schooling processes that involve them directly. (1.25)

Pupils recognise that bullying is a serious and widespread problem in schools where the victims, and often their friends, feel intimidated and frequently fear being harmed by their bullies. Pupils also acknowledged that once informed, schools took measures to eliminate specific cases of bullying. (1.25)

The school community cannot be considered as a single community and should be considered as a collection of smaller communities, with each community comprising pupils from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Pupils tend to form friendship groups with other pupils who come from a similar background to their own. (1.25)

Many pupils feel annoyed when they experience disruptions to their learning by some individuals in their classes. (1.25)

Pupils who are disruptive in lessons behave in that way because they prefer to be reprimanded for bad behaviour rather than expose themselves to have difficulties with their work. (1.25)

Pupils felt that more should be done to support victims of bullying through difficult times, particularly when bullying has a negative effect on the victim's sense of well-being and their achievements at school. (1.25)

Some pupils changed their attitude toward their schoolwork upon the realisation that they were heading towards academic failure, such changes were not always easy. (1.5)

Pupils want to feel empowered in respect of their school work and this may take the form of effort, motivation and success or by withdrawing effort and not succeeding. (1.5)

Pupils find it difficult, although not impossible, to change their behaviour patterns and this has an effect on their school achievements. (1.5)

Friends can reinforce the sense of learning as a pointless pastime, with some friends trying to outdo each other by engaging less with their learning and being disruptive in lessons. (1.5)

Pupils tend to value verbal feedback in respect of their work more than written feedback and most pupils enjoyed discussing their work with their teachers. (1.75)

Parents who are pushy undermine their children's confidence and this has a negative effect on that pupil's achievements and motivation. (1.75)

Giving a voice to pupils should entail more than merely using their views to improve the school's collective results; pupils should be able to contribute freely to discussions that involve not only their learning, but also the social processes that take place at school. (1.75)

Pupils who are not fluent Welsh speakers find it difficult to become full and active participants in the school's community. (1.75)

Giving a voice to pupils should be seen as a means by which they feel ownership over their own learning and where they feel themselves to be valued members of their school community. (1.75)

Elitism is considered to be a way of showing little respect towards other pupils and was considered to be a negative characteristic in some pupils. (2.0)

On a scale of 0 to 10, how fairly do you consider that your views have been represented by these findings (0 = not at all, 10 = in complete agreement)

Mean score = 8.

Appendix 7
Copy of Welsh letter sent to parents / guardians and pupil to give consent to taking part in the study.

Ysgol Tremorfa
Tremorfa

Annwyl _____

Dyddiad _____

Mae'n fwriad gennyf gynnal astudiaeth academiaidd ar y ffactorau sy'n gyfrifol am gyflawniad addysgol disgyblion yr ysgol, Fel rhan o'r astudiaeth hon, bwriadaf gyfweld nifer o ddisgyblion i'w holi ynglyn â'u diddordebau, beth maent yn ei hoffi neu ddim yn ei hoffi ynglyn â bywyd ysgol, beth yw eu gobeithion i'r dyfodol, beth yw eu teimladau ynglyn â'r pwysau gwaith y maent yn ei wynebu, ac ati. Yn ogystal, mae croso i ddisgyblion ddod â'u testynnau eu hunain i'r agenda i'w trafod gyda mi.

Bydd yr astudiaeth yn cael ei chynnal yn llwyr yn Ysgol XXXX. Serch hynny, ni fydd enw'r ysgol na'i lleoliad yn cael ei grybwyll yn yr astudiaeth, cyfeirir yn unig at 'Ysgol Tremorf - ysgol yng Nghaymru' yn y 'thesis' terfynnol. Yn ogystal, ni fydd enw'r un disgybl yn cael ei grybwyll ychwaith, caiff pob ddisgybl ddewis ffugenw ei hun ar gyfer y thesis. Yn dilyn y cyfweiliadau, caiff pob disgybl gyfle i ddarllen drwy'r sgript cyfweiliad, ac i newid unrhyw agwedd ohonno pe dymunir hynny. Pan gaiff y sgriptiau eu derbyn i fod yn gywir gan y disgybl, yna, byddaf yn eu dadansoddi gyda sgriptiau disgyblion eraill. Yn ogystal, bydd disgyblion sydd wedi eu cyfweld yn y Gymraeg yn cael cyfle i gadarnhau eu bod yn hapus gyda'r cyfieithiad Saesneg cyn i mi eu cynnwys yn y thesis.

Daeth enw XXXX i fyny fel rhan o'r sampl y bwriadaf eu cyfweld ar gyfer yr astudiaeth yma a theimlaf y byddai ei f/barn yn un hynod o bwysig. Bwriad y llythyr hwn felly yw i ofyn i chwi am eich caniatâd i'w g/chyfweld ar gyfer yr astudiaeth. Bwriadaf gynnal y cyfweiliadau yn ystod amser cinio yn fy ystafell ddosbarth yn yr ysgol ar adeg sy'n gyfleus i XXXX (ni ddylai'r un cyfweiliad gymeryd mwy nag ugain munud).

Wrth gwrs, mae croeso i chwi drafod y mater ymhellach gyda mi pe dymunech wneud hynny - efallai y gallech roi gwybod i mi pa bryd fyddai'n gyfleus i mi gysylltu â chi dros y ffôn. Os ydych yn fodlon i mi gyfweld XXXX, buaswn yn ddiolchgar iawn petaech chi a Ryan yn arwyddo gwaelod y llythyr hwn, a'i ddychwelyd ataf. Amgaeaf gopi sbâr o'r llythyr i chwi ei gadw.

Edrychaf ymlaen at glywed gennych,

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Mrs Delyth W Tomos

'Rwyf yn fodlon i XXXX gael ei gyfweld yn unol â'r hyn â amlinellwyd yn y llythyr uchod.

..... Llofnod Rhiant

..... Llofnod y Disgybl

Dyddiad

Copy of English letter sent to parents / guardians and pupil to give consent to taking part in the study.

Ysgol Tremorfa,
Tremorfa

Dear _____,

Date : _____

I intend to conduct academic research into the factors responsible for the educational motivation of our school pupils. In order to complete this research, it is my intention to interview a number of pupils to explore their general views & interests, their opinions about school life, their aspirations for the future, their thoughts regarding the pressures of work, etc. Additionally, pupils may raise further matters that they would like to discuss with me.

The research will be conducted exclusively at XXXX school. However, the names of the school and its location will not be disclosed in the study report – reference will only be made to ‘Ysgol Tremorfa, a school in Wales’ in the thesis. Additionally, the names of the pupils who agree to participate in the study will not be disclosed, each pupil will choose their own pseudonym and be represented by that name in the thesis. Following the interviews, each participant will be given the opportunity to read the transcripts, and make any amendments or corrections should they wish. I shall only use transcripts that have been verified as accurate by XXXX. Additionally, pupils who have been interviewed in Welsh will have an opportunity to verify the correctness of any transcripts that have been translated into English for inclusion in the thesis.

XXXXXs name has appeared as a part of a sample of pupils I wish to interview and I feel her/his thoughts and opinions would be of great value to this study. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission to interview her/him as a part of this research. I intend conducting interviews, which should take no longer than 20 minutes, in my own classroom during school dinner hours at a time that is convenient to XXXX.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, or wish to know more about the research, perhaps you could let me know a convenient time to contact you by phone? If you agree for XXXX to be interviewed for this study, I would be grateful if both you and XXXX could sign the lower portion of this letter and return it to me. I enclose a copy of this letter for your own records.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

Mrs Delyth Wyn Tomos

I agree to XXXX being interviewed with regards to that described in the above letter.

_____ Parent/ Guardian's Signature

_____ Pupil's signature

Date _____

References.

- Alcoff, L. (1991) The Problem of Speaking for Others, *Cultural Critique* **20**, 5 – 32.
- Ames, C. (1992) Classrooms: goals, structures and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, **84** 261 – 271.
- Anderson, J.R. (1983) *The architecture of cognition*. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.
- Anderman, E.M. & Maehr, M.L. (1994) Motivation and Schooling in the Middle Grades, *Review of Educational Research*, **64** (2) 287 – 309
- Anderson,
- Atkinson, P. & Hammersley, M. (1994) Ethnography and Participant Observation, in Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln (eds.), Y.S., *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London, Sage Publications.
- Bandura, A. (1993) Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, **28** 117 – 148.
- Berndt, T.J. & Keefe, K. (1996) Friends' influence on school adjustment: A motivational analysis. In Juvonen, J. & Wentzel K. (Eds.) *Social Motivation: Understanding school adjustment*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, L. & Mannion, L (1994) *Research Methods in Education*, London. Routledge Falmer.

Coleman, J. (1961) *The adolescent society*. Glencoe, IL. Free Press.

Covington, M. (1984) The self-worth theory of achievement motivation: findings and implication, *Elementary School Journal*, **85** 5 – 20.

Daniels, E. & Arapostathis, M. (2005) What do they really want? Student Voices and Motivation Research, *Urban Education*, **40** (1) 34 – 59

Department for Education and Science (2002) *Education Act Statutory Instrument 2002*, No 2002 (C.63) (Commencement No. 1)

Day, J (1996) School friendship groups and their impact on learning. *Education 3 – 13: International Journal of Primary elementary and early years education*. **24** 51 – 58.

Doddington, C., Flutter, J. & Rudduck, J. (1999) Exploring and explaining ‘dips’ in motivation and performance in primary and secondary schooling. *Research in Education* **61**.

Dörnyei, Z. (2000) Motivation in action: Towards a process-oriented conceptualisation of student motivation, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **70** 519 – 538

Duffield, J., Allan, J., Turner, E. & Morris, B. (2000) Pupils' Voices on Achievement: an alternative to the standards agenda, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, **30** (2) 263 – 274

Dweck, C.S. (1986) Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, **41** 1040 – 1048.

Dweck, C.S. & Leggett, E.L. (1988) A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review*, **95**, 256 – 273.

Eisner, E (1992), 'Objectivity in Educational Research' from *Curriculum Inquiry*, **22** (1). Cambridge, Massachusetts, Basil Blackwell.

Elliott, J., Hufton, N., Illushin, L. & Lauchlan, F. (2001) Motivation in the junior years: international perspectives on children's attitudes, expectations and behaviour and their relationship to educational achievement, *Oxford Review of Education* **27** (1) 37 – 68

Epstein, J.L. (1983) *Friends in school: Patterns of selection and influence in secondary school*. New York, Academic Press.

Fielding, M. (2001) Students as Radical Agents of Change, *Journal of Educational Change*, 2, 123 – 141

Fielding, M. (2004) Transformative approaches to student voice: theoretical underpinnings, recalcitrant realities, *British Educational Research Journal*, 30 (2) 295 – 311

Fielding, M. (2006) *Student voice: revolution, renewal or regression?* Seminar presentation to the Sussex School of Education, Sussex University.

Flutter, J. & Rudduck, J. (2004) *Consulting pupils: what's in it for schools?* London, Routledge Falmer

Fontana, A. & Frey, J.H. (2005), The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement, in Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research – Third Edition* London, Sage Publications.

Foucault, M. (1980) Two Lectures, in *Power / Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings*, London, Pantheon.

Geertz, C (1973) Thick description: Towards an interpretive theory of culture, in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York, Basic Books.

Gillham, B (2000) *Case Study Research Methods*, London, New York. Continuum.

Gorard, S., Rees, G & Salisbury, J (2001) Investigating the patterns of differential attainment of boys and girls at school. *British Educational Research Journal* **27** (2) 125 - 139

Gunter, H. & Thomson, P. (2007) But, where are the children? *Management in Education*, **21** (1) 23 – 28

Hammersely, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 2nd Edition. London, Tavistock.

Hargreaves, A. (1996) Revisiting Voice, *Educational Researcher* **25** (1) 12 – 19

Hellawell, D. (2006) Inside-out: analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research. *Teaching in Higher Education*, **11** (4) 483 - 494

Hendley, D., Parkinson, J., Stables, A & Tanner, H (1995) Gender differences in pupil attitudes to the National Curriculum foundation subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Technology in Key Stage 3 in South Wales. *Educational Studies* **21** (1) 85 - 97

Hidi, S. & Harackiewicz, J.M. (2000) Motivating the Academically Unmotivated: A Critical Issue for the 21st Century. *Review of Educational Research* **70** (2) 151 - 179.

Holloway, W & Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing qualitative research differently*.
London, Sage Publications.

Humphries, B. (1994) Empowerment and social research: Elements of an analytic framework. In Humphries, B & Truman, C. (eds.) *Rethinking Social Research: Anti-discriminatory Approaches in Research Methodology*,
185 – 204, Aldershot, Avebury.

Jackson, C. (2002) 'Laddishness' as a Self-worth Protection Strategy. *Gender and Education* **14** (1) 37-51

Jacobs, P.A. & Newstead, S.E. (2000) The nature and development of student motivation, *British Journal of Educational Psychology* **70** 243 – 254

Jenkins, R. (1996) *Social Identity*, London, Routledge.

Joffe, H & Yardley, L (2003) Content and thematic analysis, in Marks, D.F. & Yardley, L (Eds) *Research methods for clinical & health psychology*. London, Sage Publications. 56 – 68

Kemmis, S. (1980) The imagination of the case and the invention of the study. In Simons, H. (Ed) *Towards a science of the singular* Norwich, University of East Anglia, Centre for Applied Research in Education,
92 – 142.

Keys, W & Fernandes, C. (1995) What do students think about school? in Moon, B & Mayes, S. (1995) *Teaching and Learning in the Secondary School*. London, Routledge.

Lave, J & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning; Legitimate peripheral participation* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

League of Nations, (1924) *Geneva declaration of the Rights of the Child*, [online], available at <http://www.un-documents.net/gdrc1924.htm>
[Accessed 10 July 2009]

LeCompte, M. (1993) A framework for hearing silence: what does telling stories mean when we are supposed to be doing science? In McLaughlin, D. & Tierney, W.G. (eds.) *Naming silenced lives: personal narratives and processes of educational change*, New York Routledge.

Lincoln, Y.S. (1995) In Search of Students' Voices. *Theory into Practice* **34** (2) 88 – 93

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications..

McIntyre, D., Pedder, D. & Rudduck, J. (2005) Pupil voice: comfortable and uncomfortable learnings for teachers, *Research Papers in Education* **20** (2) 149 – 168

Masson, J. (2004) The Legal Context, in Fraser, S., Lewis, V., Ding, S., Kellett, M. & Robinson, C. (Eds,) (2004) *Doing Research with Children and Young People*. London, Sage Publications.

Maxwell, J.A. (1992) Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*, **63**, 279 - 300

May, T. (1997) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process (2nd Edition)*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Meece, J.L., Blumenfeld, P.C. & Hoyle, R.K. (1988) Students' goal orientations and cognitive engagement in classroom activities, *Journal of Educational Psychology* **88** 514 – 523.

Mifsud, C (1993) Gender differentials in the classroom. *Research in Education* **49** 11 – 22

Myhill, D. (2002) Bad Boys and Good Girls? Patterns of Interaction and Response in Whole Class Teaching. *British Educational Research Journal* **28(3)** 339-351.

O.E.D. (2005), Oxford English Dictionary Version 1.0.2, Copyright Apple Computer Inc.

Pahl, R. (1995) *After success: Fin de Siècle Anxiety and Identity*. Cambridge. Polity.

Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Titz, W. & Perry, R.P. (2002) Academic emotions in students' self-regulated learning and achievement: a program of qualitative and quantitative research. *Educational Psychologist*, **37** (2) 91 – 105.

Phillips, D.C. (1989) Objectivity in educational research. In Hammersley, M. (ed.) (1993) *Educational Research: current issues*. London, Sage Publications.

Piaget, J. (1954) *The construction of reality in the child*. New York, Basic Books.

Pintrich, P.R. (1999) The role of motivation in promoting and sustaining self-regulated learning, *International Journal of Educational Research*, **31** (1999), 459 – 470.

Riddell, S. (1989) 'It's nothing to do with me': Teachers' views and gender divisions in the curriculum. In Acker, S (ed.) *Teachers, Gender & Careers*, Lewes, The Falmer Press.

Roberts, G., Kent, B., Prys, D., & Lewis, R. (2003) Describing chronic pain: Towards bilingual practice. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. **40** (8). 889 – 902.

Robinson, C. & Taylor, C. (2007) Theorising student voice: values and perspectives, *Improving Schools* **10** (1) 5 – 17.

Rudduck, J. (2006) The past, the papers and the project, *Educational Review* **58** (2) 131 – 143.

Rudduck, J., Chaplain, R. & Wallace, G. (1996) *School Improvement: What can pupils tell us?* London, David Fulton Publishers

Rudduck, J. & Flutter, J. (2000) Pupil Participation and Pupil Perspective: ‘carving a new order of experience’, *Cambridge Journal of Education* **30** (1) 75 – 89

Said, E.W. (1989) Representing the Colonized: Anthropology’s Interlocutors, *Critical Inquiry* **15** (2) 205 – 225

Salisbury, J., Rees, G & Gorard, S (1999) Accounting for the differential attainment of boys. *School Leadership & Management* **19** (4) 403 - 426

Shklarov, S. (2007) Double Vision Uncertainty; The Bilingual Researcher and the Ethics of Cross-Language Research. *Qualitative Health Research* **17** (4) 529 – 538

Schofield, J.W. (1989) Increasing the Generalizability of Qualitative Research, In Hammersley, M. (ed.) (1993) *Educational Research: current issues* . London, Sage Publications.

Schwandt, T.A. (2000) Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition), Newbury Park CA, Sage.

Scott, D (Facilitator) *Methodology Seminar* (01.10.01 – 22.11.01) Doctorate in Education – First Class On-Line Seminars Series

Seifert, T.L (1997) Academic goals and emotions: results of a structural equation model and cluster analysis. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* **67** 323 – 338

Seifert, T.L. (2004) Understanding student motivation, *Educational Research* **46** (2) 137 – 149

Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London, Sage Publications.

Skinner, B.F (1974) *About Behaviourism*. New York, Knopf.

Stake, R.E. (1994) Qualitative Case Studies in Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* London, Sage Publications.

Stake, R.E. (2005) Case Studies in Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (3rd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Stenhouse, L. (1983) The aims of the secondary school, in Stenhouse, L (Ed) *Authority, Education and Emancipation*, 153 – 155, London, Heinemann Educational Books.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA, Sage.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998) Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview, in Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, London, Sage Publications

The Open University (2004) *EdD programme guide*, Milton Keynes, The Open University.

Thompson, T. & Perry, Z. (2005) Is the poor performance of self-worth protective students linked with social comparison goals? *Educational Psychology* **25** (5) 471 – 490

Trebilcot, J. (1988) Dyke Methods, *Hypatia* **3** (2) 1 - 13

United Nations (1959) *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* [online].

United Nations General Assembly resolution 1386 (xiv).

Available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm>

[Accessed 10 July 2009]

United Nations (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* [online].

United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/44/25.

Available at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/44/a44r025.htm>

[Accessed 10 July 2009]

Urdan, T.C. & Maehr, M.L. (1995) Beyond a Two-Goal Theory of Motivation and Achievement: A Case for Social Goals. *Review of Educational Research* **65** (3) 213 - 243.

Wagg, S. (1996) 'Don't try to understand them'; politics, childhood and the new education market, in Pilcher, J. & Wagg, S. (eds) *Thatcher's children? Politics, childhood and society in the 1980s and 1990s*. 8 – 28, London, Falmer Press.

Warrington, M. & Younger, M. (2000) The Other Side of the Gender Gap. *Gender and Education* **12** (4) 493 - 508.

Weiner B. (1984) Principles for a theory of student motivation and their application with an attributional framework, *Research on Motivation in Education: Student Motivation* **6** 15 – 38

Weiner, B. (1985) An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion, *Psychological Review* **92** 548 – 573.

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice : Learning, Meaning and Identity*, New York Cambridge University Press.

Wentzel, K.R. (1989) Adolescent classroom goals, standards for performance, and academic achievement: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Educational Psychology* **81** 131 – 142.

Wentzel, K.R. (1993) Motivation and achievement in early adolescence: The role of multiple classroom goals. *Journal of Early Adolescence* **13** 4 – 20.

Wigfield, A., Eccles, J.S. & Rodriguez, D. (1998) The Development of Children's Motivation in School Contexts. *Review of Research in Education* **23** 73 - 118.

Wood, E. (2003) The power of pupil-perspectives in evidence-based practice : the case of gender and underachievement, *Research Papers in Education* **18** (4) 365 – 383

Yeung, A.S. & McInerney, D.M. (2005) Students' school motivation and aspiration over high school years, *Educational Psychology* **25** (5) 537 – 554.

Younger, M. & Warrington, M. (1996) Differential Achievement of Girls and Boys and GCSE: some observations from the perspective of one school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* **17** (3) 299-313.